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THE GOD OF OUR FATHERS

The God of Our Fathers

edw
By *Patrick*
H. P. S. *myth*
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Preface

MY purpose in writing this book is to present in popular language some of the arguments usually advanced for the existence of God.

I do not write for the learned, who, if they desire, may consult the great works written on this the greatest of all subjects. I address myself to the average man or woman, whose interests in the matter are no less than those of the scholar.

While I do not expect technical knowledge in the reader, I do hope that he will have a desire to know, and a willingness to exercise his mental faculties. If he does not care about the subject, this book is not for him; if he be not willing to strive towards an understanding of the matter, I can not help him; if he would prefer not to know God, he will not, of course, bother with what I have to say.

Believing as I do that no one can be convinced against his will, I have no hope of influencing those who are atheists by profession; or those who think that atheism and enlightenment walk hand-in-hand. Pride of intellect, or attachment to opinion regardless of its truth, has a blinding influence which is not easily counteracted. Similarly, a desire to live one's life in one's own way, without fear of having to render an account, has made many a mind impervious to the light. A belief in God means restraint, and restraint is not always acceptable.

A college or university campus often gives opportunity for propagating atheism. There seems to be a degree of daring about it that fascinates the minds of the young. To think for one's self and to decide one's own course of action appear splendid to those who have not learned the true meaning of law. Incorrect views of the supreme Law-giver aid the process.

To help those who, in any walk of life, are striving to stay the dreadful tendency of the age is my purpose. I avoid to the best of my ability all technical language, and endeavour to write for those who love plain speaking.

I would, however, utter the admonition that, the question does not depend upon my presentation of it. Even though it should appear that some, or all, of my arguments are inconclusive, the Great First Cause would still exist and be demonstrable.

I would ask the reader to come to a consideration of the matter with an open mind, and with an earnestness in some measure worthy of the subject. For, while conviction is especially the work of the intellect, it is attained only by the whole man. Moral qualities play an important part in religious belief; indeed, so important a part, that it is idle to reason with those who are lacking in them.

To friends of the cause I would say: should you find my presentation of the subject inadequate, go to the masters, of whom there are many. I have no hope of writing an exhaustive work, and shall be satisfied if I can but aid even a few towards accepting a Being whose existence is to me as real as my own.

No believer in God need fear that his sensibilities will be hurt by what I have to say. There is not in this little book a word of controversy with any Christian body. I do not once mention or refer to any denomination or sect.

Before coming to the arguments proper I deal with such questions as are related to my subject, or enter into the consideration of it.

My first intention was to give this book as title "The Unknown God"; a name taken from an altar St. Paul found in Athens (Acts xvii. 23). I hoped in this way to emphasize my conviction that most, if not all, honest doubt and denial come from a wrong understanding of the nature and attributes of God. It is of small value to know that He is, if we do not also know what He is.

I trust these preliminaries will help the reader to understand the methods adopted in this little book.

H. P. S.

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I

ISMS THAT DENY OR DESTROY

AGNOSTICISM

AWORD derived from the Greek negative *A* and the Greek term for knowing. It signifies "not knowing," and was coined by Professor Huxley to express his own attitude. It was likely suggested by the name given to an early sect that pretended to special knowledge, the Gnostics. Agnosticism goes to the other extreme.

The position of the agnostic is considered humble, because he professes ignorance. It is also considered strong, because he has nothing to defend. But one may reasonably ask if its humility be not masked pride. The agnostic seems, at least sometimes, to say to others: "You are credulous. Insufficient arguments satisfy you. I refuse to be deceived. My mind is more exacting."

If the agnostic position be strong, it is because it is purely negative, in other words, not a position at all. He says, "I don't know"—a statement that is hard to refute. For it simply expresses one's own condition, of which each one must be the best judge.

Yet, perhaps, the agnostic attitude is the least logical of all. For, while the atheist sweeps away every power above himself, the agnostic is still confronted with a possibility that is very disturbing.

There may be a God, and if there be, we must all meet Him one day. And, perhaps, among the questions He will ask in that day will be this: "Since you doubted, why did you not settle the doubt? Did you do your best? Did you consult those who might help you to solve the problem? Surely, it was important enough to demand your best attention."

The question is often raised as to whether or not agnosticism is a pose, with an affectation of superiority. Some even think that not infrequently it may be a way of escaping from a difficult position. If there be a God, He is a Lawgiver and a Judge. It sometimes happens that it is pleasanter to forget all about Him. Belief in Him does so interfere with one's liberty! The wish in such matters is often as Shakespeare would say, "Father to the thought." Hence, the neutral position which the agnostic assumes may not be as ingenuous as he would have us believe.

ATHEISM

The term is derived from two Greek words, one (a) negative, the other (theos) signifying God. It is, therefore, a system of thought which denies the existence of God. In popular language the word infidelity is often used for atheism. But this is inexact. Infidelity, properly speaking, means the absence of faith, which is the acceptance of a truth on authority. But we can know, and many do accept, the existence of God from reason alone. Hence, one may be an infidel without being an atheist. Some of the great pagans were, through the exercise of their own faculties, con-

vinced of God's existence. St. Paul has something to say upon the matter in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, which I refer to as an historical document. Those who accept the existence of God without believing in divine revelation are called Deists, from *Deus*, the Latin name of God.

Atheists not only reject divine revelation but deny that there is any God to give a revelation. They would not only refuse what faith teaches, but, also, what great minds have reached through the exercise of natural reason in reference to God's existence. Atheism, properly so called, is sure that God does not exist.

Whether there are any atheists in this positive sense is gravely doubted by many. The present writer is not prepared to affirm or deny. He wishes, however, to record that he once saw a declared atheist get down on his knees, in a moment of great affliction, and ask his friends to pray with him and for him. But we are not justified in concluding from this and similar occurrences that there are no out-and-out atheists. However, the question is merely a curious one and is not gravely important. It does not concern our discussion much whether there are positive atheists or not.

However, when we find a man—and we often find him—dwelling constantly on possible and impossible objections to the existence of a Deity; when we find him refusing to give any consideration to arguments for such an existence, we are forced to the conviction that such a one is profoundly interested in eliminating God from his own thoughts. What prompts him to

do this is a question. Some will say that he does so that he may live the life of a libertine; others may regard him as naturally perverse. It must be admitted that there is no reasonable explanation of the attitude.

Personally, I have the greatest sympathy for the man who cannot accept God. Existence must be very bleak to him, especially as he draws towards the evening of life. The hopes he may have had in his youth have dwindled and the future is dark, indeed. The grave will soon open to receive him, and then what? Is it any wonder such a one asks why there should be such a thing as human life?

While our hearts go out to this sad condition, we have not a thought of sympathy with the one who is trying to get rid of the idea of God; who is constantly battling against the possibility of a Judge Who will one day pass upon our actions, and whose decision will be final.

Yet, perhaps our pity should be extended more plentifully to the latter. For, we who believe in a beneficent God can readily see Him extending mercy to the one who could not accept Him, while He executes justice upon those who wilfully closed their eyes to the light.

DUALISM

Dualism, from a Latin word (*duo*) signifying two, professes a belief in two principles or deities, one good and the other bad. Like almost all religions, and most heresies, it comes out of the East, where it still exercises considerable influence.

It entered Europe as Manicheism in the fourth century of the Christian era. Maintaining that the human body was the work of the Evil principle, the Manicheans were opposed to the propagation of the race, hence, to marriage.

Dualism was also the doctrine of Cathari in the eleventh century and of the Albigenses in the twelfth. It manifested itself from time to time in other sectaries.

Like most other systems, it was differently explained at different times and by different teachers. While the doctrine made the two principles eternal and independent, yet it was occasionally so modified as to make the Evil principle the weaker.

Manicheism has, of course, nothing in common with the Jewish and Christian teaching concerning the Evil Spirit, or Devil. He is always represented, not as a principle, but as a creature—therefore, neither eternal nor independent.

To admit two independent principles would, of course, be to destroy the supremacy of either. In the supposition there would be no supreme being at all. Each would limit the other.

Even to concede that the evil principle, though inferior, has a certain field in which it is independent would be to destroy the supremacy of God, and therefore to destroy our view of Him. We are not concerned in a Deity that is not absolute.

It will not do to argue that, according to Jewish and Christian teaching, Satan enjoys a certain degree of absolute jurisdiction, for neither Jew nor Christian makes any such admission. The present writer

believes himself orthodox in holding that Satan has no power in the spiritual affairs of men, beyond that which men, in the exercise of their free will, concede him. He is permitted by the Creator to tempt and annoy us, but he wins no victory without our consent. Man alone defies God, but his defiance is of short duration. He must soon either return to obedience, or take the consequences of his conduct.

In thus limiting Satan's power I am not unmindful of the history of Job, or of others who have suffered materially from the assaults of the Evil One. Such things are but exceptional and are permitted for a purpose. They do not show that an iota of independent power belongs to Satan.

POLYTHEISM

The system, as the two Greek words (*polus* and *theos*) from which the name is derived imply, is a belief in many gods. As the nations departed from the true idea of God, they began to create their own gods. Cities had gods to look after local affairs. It was the duty of these divinities to repay their worshipers by some form of service; as, for instance, by sending rain or sunshine when needed, or by coming to the aid of their followers in time of war, etc. The gods were not usually asked to pass upon the cause in whose assistance they were invoked. Like a certain class of politicians, they were expected to stand by their friends, regardless of the righteousness of the conflict.

Above these local or national gods, peoples usually

acknowledged, though they may not have always worshipped, a superior, or even a supreme deity.

While each nation aimed to create its own gods, yet often we find the same deity under different names in different countries. Zeus of the Greeks was probably the Roman Jupiter, and the Egyptian Ammon.

PANTHEISM

The term is derived from two Greek words which mean All-God, and the accepted meaning remains true to the derivation. All things are God, and God is all things. God is neither apart from nor above the Universe, but is one with it.

Oneness is all-pervading. Things are united by bonds that cannot be broken. All are one and this one is God. The armies that strive to annihilate one another, hostile races, the conqueror and the vanquished, the hunter and the hunted, the destroyer and the destroyed, all are one. So are earth, air, and water, mind and matter, living things and dead things.

Various explanations of the pantheistic theory have been given. But it would seem that the simpler and broader the exposition the better. If God be all and all be God, let us leave it at that.

It is rather amusing to think of the insignificant creature that man is, discussing the great All of which he is such an infinitesimal fraction. But men have engaged in such speculation from the beginning. It has had a special fascination for the Oriental mind. To unify all in a grand conception makes such an appeal to the imagination! It has had its attraction

for every age and every clime. Spinoza and Giordano Bruno are numbered among its protagonists.

Pantheism does away with sin, for God can do no wrong, and there is nothing but He. Especially, He cannot offend Himself. Further, He is not free, but moves along of necessity with the *all* which He is. Having no freedom, He is not a moral being. For the All-one there is no such thing as right or wrong, truth or falsehood.

Of course, neither is there any such thing as religion. How could the All-one be bound by obligation to Itself? How could It fall down in worship of Itself? It cannot put Itself under obligation, nor can It so put any part of Itself. We (pardon the assumption) are free from obligation, because we are part of the Great All, but not free from compulsion. We can no more separate ourselves from the All-God than a clod of earth can part company from our sphere as it travels through space. We are tied to It, not by moral obligation, but by necessity.

In the pantheistic view, God is no more than the universe to which He is inseparably united. Neither is He unchangeable, but is subject to all the vicissitudes that manifest themselves in matter and in mind. It may, of course, be said that these changes are imaginary. But how can we who are part of the All-God, be guilty of false imaginings? Since the One Being, which alone exists, is operating in us we can make no mistakes; neither can we be guilty of any offense. We live the life of the All-God. Hence, we can do no wrong, and when we die, no matter how we may have lived, we remain with the One

Great All from which we have never been separated. This is pantheism.

Some there are who would strive to limit or modify the ism. But it seems ridiculous to accept the theory which is so grandiose, and then try to mutilate it. It is especially amusing, as already said, to find man, so insignificant a part of the All-God, imposing his views upon the Mighty Whole.

EMANATIONISM

This system, variously interpreted, effects the universe primarily. It would hold that whatever is has come from an Eternal Being; not through the free act of Creation, but through a natural and necessary "flowing from." Material things are farthest removed from the great Eternal source; hence they belong to the lowest order.

A WORLD-SOUL

This is a sort of spiritual Emanation from the Universal Intelligence, which in turn emanates from God. The World-Soul works through an emanation which is called Nature, and which gives life and energy to Material things.

There are many kindred speculations, usually of oriental origin, which today have interest merely for the student of such matters.

II

OUR VIEW

MONOTHEISM

THE term is derived from two Greek words *monos*, only, and *theos*, God, only one God. Monotheism recognizes one God, who is apart from, and above, the universe of created things; but yet actively operating in it. It is, therefore, different from all the other "isms."

The Jews were monotheists. They were kept apart from the other nations in order that the idea of only one God might be preserved intact. All Christians are monotheists. The fact that a majority of them accept a trinity of persons in the God-head does not change the situation.

Mohammedanism is also strictly monotheistic. Allah of Islam is the Jehovah of Israel. Many of the nations have been monotheistic in the sense that, while believing in many gods, they regarded one as supreme.

A PERSONAL GOD

When I speak of God, I mean a personal God—one Who thinks and wills, One Who says, "I know," "I love," "I hate," "I reward," "I punish," "I am obeyed or disobeyed."

The objection to a personal God arises usually from

a misunderstanding of the word person. Many think that a person must be a human being in some form. Hence, when you talk to them of a personal God they immediately have visions of a huge man, an immeasurable figure, with limbs extending from end to end mightily. They have what is called the anthropomorphic idea of God.

But the word *person* does not necessarily imply the human form, great or small. Indeed, it does not imply form at all. An angel, though a pure spirit, hence without figure or outline, is a person. Human beings are persons, but not because of their human forms. What, then constitutes a person?

A person is a complete intelligent being. A being that can say "I." The human soul is not a person, but is part of a person—hence not complete. It is the human being, not the soul, that says "I." The lower animals are not persons, for they are not intelligent. They cannot say "I"—"I did it," "I suffered it," "I am responsible."

God is a complete intelligent being. He differs from other persons in His being infinite in knowledge, in power, in goodness, etc. He has all perfections in an infinite degree. Hence, when we speak of God we do not try to visualize a measureless human being: we think of a spirit, complete in itself, individual, intelligent, infinite—nothing less than this is God.

To make a power, no matter how great, God, is to deify blind force, and to banish justice and all morality from the earth. A power does not ask us to love or serve it; it is not displeased when we hate it. We

may not, perhaps, resist it; but any form of scheming that takes us out of its way is good; the most exalted altruism, if it put us in its path, is foolish. The experimenter dies in making his experiments; the owner of the motor is ditched by it. Force crushes good and bad alike.

Hence, a God that is a mere power must be deaf to the claims of justice, devotion, charity, gratitude. He knows no distinction between friend and foe. The moral world does not exist for him, nor he for the moral world. Only a personal God can have any claim upon us, upon our love, gratitude, or service. A non-personal God is no God at all. Paganism has held many strange and absurd ideas of God, but it never descended to the utterly impersonal view of Him.

The cause, then, that I plead is that of a God, personal, individual, intelligent; the Creator of the Universe, its conscious Ruler, the Source of the moral order.

The trouble with most people is their desire to visualize everything. If they cannot see a figure the thing has no meaning for them. Yet, we do not see our thoughts, nor do we see the thinking faculty. Real as the will is, we can visualize neither it nor its acts. Spiritual things are without outline, therefore cannot be imaged. Do not try to visualize God, Who, having no body, is without form or figure; yet is nevertheless real.

THE PROPER ATTITUDE TOWARDS GOD

Most people accept the existence of God on faith.

The only strictly logical way, however, is by reason. We must know that there is a God before we can be called upon to accept His word. In stern logic, then, the conviction that He exists precedes our other attitudes towards Him.

The evidences of His existence are sufficient, and more than sufficient, to satisfy the demands of the most exacting mind; while the fact of His existence is so important that no one can afford to be indifferent to it. Since He exists, all things are His; all are from Him; all must in one way or another return to Him. We never can get beyond the limits of His jurisdiction. Not for a moment can we be independent of Him.

Sometimes men speak as though we were free to accept or refuse His dominion. Yet, no one ever admits that a child is free to acknowledge or reject its parents. The parents are in position by right, and the child's refusal (if such a thing were possible) would not weaken their authority.

Nor is any one ever told that he may refuse allegiance to his country. It is never even dreamed of that there is liberty of choice in the matter. Each government stands upon its rights and proceeds to reduce to submission those who question its authority.

Now, if there is but one possible attitude towards parents, and one possible attitude towards country, how happens it that men allow the young to decide for themselves whether they shall accept the august Ruler of the universe or not? If there be no choice in minor matters, how can there possibly be room for hesitancy in a relationship that immeasurably tran-

scends all others? Parents and country come from God; but while we may not dispute their jurisdiction we are at liberty to question His! This is the fearful position that foolish men take.

None can properly proclaim the existence of God but those who regard the rejection of Him as supreme folly or utter wickedness—in either case the greatest of all evils. To regard Him as appealing to us with anything less than absolute right is to utterly fall below the demands of the situation. His claim upon us surpasses ten thousand fold all other claims. We reject Him at our peril.

III

QUESTIONS THAT AFFECT THE SUBJECT

THERE MUST BE A CAUSE

EVERY existing thing must have a cause for its existence, and the cause must be equal to the work of producing or causing it. This is the principle of causality, which is fundamental in the process of knowing.

It is said that no one can prove the principle, but every one accepts it; save a few who wish to talk philosophically. But if you deny it, all science, all knowledge, all progress goes with your denial. If it be not true then you can have murder without a murderer, a collision with nothing to collide, growth without anything to feed on; you can have war without anyone making it, bread without material. Indeed you may have all the absurdities and impossibilities in great abundance.

When the weather man foretells the weather, he pays tribute to the principle of causality. When the scientist investigates some new phenomenon, when the state sends its officers to discover the author of some crime, when one lights a fire on a winter's day, all are under the influence of the principle of causality. You can neither think nor act without a recognition of its position.

If you reject the principle of causality, you can-

not tell what is going to happen at any moment; chaos would reign and ordered existence would be impossible.

But, you may say, if everything must have a cause, what of God? Is there something back of Him? We answer: He is His own cause, having in Himself the reason of His own being. He is an eternal and necessary Being. His nature is to exist.

If this seems puzzling to you, remember that there is no means of getting away from it. If there were no necessary being there never would be any being. This will appear later on in our discussion.

CHANCE

There is no such agency as chance; hence it produces nothing. It cannot make a sod of earth; it could not make the world; for the reason that as a maker or a doer of things it has no existence.

You chance to meet a friend at a railroad station. Did chance bring either of you to the place? Certainly not. Each of you planned your trip, and took the necessary means of arriving at the particular time. If you were to wait until chance should lift you out of your home and transport you to the railroad depot you would stay at home a long while. The only chance in the circumstances arises from the fact that you had not planned to meet your friend there.

When chance is adverse we, popularly, call it accident. Two motor cars meet at a certain corner and an accident happens. Did chance cause the collision? No. Each driver had planned to be at the precise spot at the precise time, and consumed enough gas to

bring him to it. Of course, neither knew that he would encounter the other. Hence the accident, in which the cars smashed into one another and did damage. The speed and weight of the machines did the damage. They were the agencies. The gambler plays a game of chance. The wheel he turns stops at a certain number, and the one who has purchased that number wins. But the wheel stops where it must stop, because the force exercised no longer overcomes the resistance. It cannot go any farther, and it could not stop before. So with the card deal and the throw of the dice. The only chance in any one of these situations comes from the fact that the precise result was not foreseen, and, therefore, could not have been intended.

ETERNITY

It is difficult to make this subject clear. Eternity is the perfect and simultaneous possession of interminable life. It has neither beginning, nor end, nor succession; neither past nor present, but is a continuous *now*. God alone, according to our Christian teaching, is eternal. He is interminable, perfect life. His own definition of Himself is "I am who am."

But, in the language of the day, there is an eternity which is not of this kind. It is one which has seen, according to the evolutionist, the development of the world through untold years. It is endless, but not simultaneous. It is a series, a succession of years or periods, that stretches back without limit. There, in the fathomless depths of an endlessly remote past, was the something from which the present universe

came. No imagination can count the years that separate that beginning from the present time. When the evolutionist of today talks of billions of years he scarcely taps the supply of eons at his disposal.

Here we have two ideas of eternity, the one coming down to us from the early centuries of our era, the other a modern view, the view of materialism.

THE INFINITE

The word is derived from two Latin words (*in* and *finis*) and signifies without limit or boundary, therefore, unlimited. Limits and boundaries fix a line beyond which a thing may not go. In matters infinite there is no such line.

Many things are called infinite simply because they are huge, or because we are unable to measure them. In popular language we have such expressions as infinite pains, infinite patience. Such expressions imply, at most, that no effort has been spared to accomplish the result. But, the use of the word "infinite" in such cases is wholly inaccurate.

Properly speaking, the word "infinite" must be taken in its simplest meaning, which is actually endless or unlimited; not merely that we can assign no limit to it, but that there is none to be assigned. Were supreme intelligence to pass on the matter it would use the word infinite in describing it.

There is an infinity improperly so-called, which simply means the indeterminate. We can set no limit to the number of times abstract figures may be increased. You can always add one or two or ten to any number. There is no number, no matter how

large, that is not increasable indefinitely. But, is it ever infinite actually? Never, for whenever you pause, you can measure it, and can begin once more to increase it. So, that which is merely infinite potentially is never actually infinite.

The question is often asked: how can finite minds know the infinite? They cannot, of course, know it as it is. But they can know it to the extent of understanding that it is unlimited. For instance, we know that certain individuals are powerful, some more powerful, some, we say, are most powerful. The latter exceed all others. Yet, we know there is a limit to the strongest. Suppose we remove that limit and say, there is nothing in any sphere of activity that such a one cannot do. Of course, this we cannot say of any created being. But if we could, we would simply say his power is unlimited. We would not comprehend the power that is unlimited, but we would understand that no limit is set to it. This is certainly some understanding, though incomplete, of the infinite.

A thing may be infinite in one phase and only one. Christians, for instance, usually believe that the human soul will not die. They therefore give it an unlimited future existence. But while they give it unlimited future existence, no one holds that it is unlimited in power, or in any other form of greatness. In the Christian view, there is but one Being infinite in all things, power, eternity, goodness, holiness, etc. In this Being there can be no change, for change implies an increase or decrease in at least one perfection. But neither can happen in this One Who is absolutely perfect Being. For absolute perfection cannot be im-

proved upon, nor can it be diminished without being rendered less than absolutely perfect.

When people speak of an infinite number, they speak inaccurately. For we can always add to any number. Hence, were any number infinite, we could easily make it more than infinite. This would of course be absurd. Also, we can deduct one from it and destroy its infinitude, which is again absurd. Infinity, then, implies undivided unity, not multiplicity.

IV

OTHER REFLECTIONS

DENIAL DOES NOT ALTER THE FACTS

THE existence of God is a question of fact. Our acceptance of Him would not bring Him into being; nor could our denial of Him put Him out. His existence or non-existence is therefore entirely independent of what we think. The conviction of the whole world, for or against, would not change the facts, be what they may, one iota. If there be no God, the believer who dies in utter faith in His existence will not wake to discover that he has been deceived; and, if there be a God, unbelief will not enable the unbelievers to escape the judgment. Not, indeed, that any one will be punished for what he could not help; but, if the one who denied God through life, should at the end encounter the great Judge, he will scarcely feel comfortable.

In this respect believers will have a decided advantage. For if it should turn out in the end that there is no God, no harm is done. But if it should finally appear that, despite the denial of some, the Fact of Facts, the Being of Beings, God, exists, those who have clung to Him during life may indeed rejoice.

One may say that if it should finally appear that there is no Deity, those who held to the conviction must feel humiliated at the thought of a life-long

superstition. The answer is very easy: If there be no God, there is no future life. Hence, the deceived ones will never learn of their deception. And if they should, they will have the satisfaction not only of having acted according to conviction, but of having believed as the mass of mankind believed. Further, they will have the merit of having accepted all the self-restraint and sacrifice which belief in God demands.

Should it be urged that believers suffer during life from foolish fears, subject themselves to laws that have no Lawgiver, and, in general, lead a timid and abject life, I do not think it would be difficult to give an adequate reply. I am quite certain, having in my time known a little of both sides, that misgivings and fears are far more likely to be found with the atheist, though he may often show himself a braggart, than with the earnest believer. Humility may be discovered in the latter, but humility is not bad; nor does it make any one contemptible. On the other hand, if there exist contentment and happiness in this world they belong almost exclusively to pious believers. I, therefore, conclude that, taking all in all, the believer, whether mistaken or not, has the better part, even in this life. Do not infer from this that I am indifferent to the truth, or that I would urge superstition as a means to happiness. It is the truth that makes us free. But if there be a doubt which cannot be solved, it is better to lean towards acceptance of the Deity—better for this life, and assuredly safer for the next. Dear reader, for your own sake weigh well this thought.

HOW FRIENDS MAY HURT THE CAUSE

The cause of God, like other causes, often suffers from its friends. Well-meaning people have been known to give strange opinions on the divine policy. Sometimes God is represented as losing His temper, after the human fashion; sometimes as thirsting for revenge. He is made to wreak vengeance upon weak and ignorant people who scarcely know their right hand from their left. In this way an excuse is given to persons who are already disposed to abandon belief in Him. These latter, instead of investigating or inquiring, assume that the picture given them is a true representation of the divine policy, and accordingly abandon their Creator.

The well-meaning people referred to tell us, for instance, that the sufferings we are called upon to endure in this life come from our heavenly Father. This is no doubt often said with the pious purpose of making us patient under trial. Yet there is not a particle of evidence that our sufferings generally come from God. That He permits them is true; and it is also true that He demands of us patience under all circumstances. But so should our best friends in this life. Impatience certainly helps no one.

God does not punish the innocent, and when hardship comes to them from other sources, He sustains them, if they are willing to be sustained, and turns even their pains into an opportunity of meriting reward. I may even go further and assert, as Christians usually maintain, that, if the Almighty sends trials to the wicked in this life, it is that they may turn from their evil ways and live. So, in the Chris-

tian view, suffering may be made spiritually wholesome for saint and sinner.

Another mistaken view would make terror the Creator's chief weapon in the government of the world. Why does He not ask us to render service freely? Why does He not coax us, as a gentle parent would coax a child?

To this I answer that God does ask for our free service; indeed, no other form of service is acceptable to Him. But when we speak of free service we do not imply that man is free to refuse to render it. It is proper that a child should serve its parents, and a citizen should serve his country, freely. But neither is free to refuse allegiance. It is a deplorable error, though quite common in this age of ours, to hold that obligation destroys freedom. We forget that duty may also be a pleasure. Each one of us has duties to home, friends, family, country. But does any one hold that we ought to be sad because of the obligation, or that we would be much happier if there were none? There is nothing more absurd, yet few things more common in our day, than the conviction that duty is a painful matter.

Similarly, there is no opinion abroad that government should be all heart and have no spinal column; that, at least, parents and God should rule by love without stern alloy.

I quite agree with the view that parental love should dominate the home, and I know that the Almighty has shown to all of us love greater than which no man hath. But if the parent allows his child to think that there is no sternness in reserve when love

fails of its purpose, he is likely to have confusion in the home. The most irritating scene one may be called to witness is a helpless mother trying to get obedience, by a manifestation of mawkish endearment, from a spoiled child. As a matter of fact, there is, there can be, no government or authority without the right and power to coerce the disobedient. Punishment should be used sparingly, and as a last resort, but to renounce the right to punish is to forfeit all authority.

It may be that preachers and teachers have dwelt too much on divine chastisement, and have in this manner appeared oblivious of the fact of everlasting love. But it may be also that there was some need of it. There are people who do not respond to the call of love; but few, indeed, are indifferent to penalties. Suppose our great cities were to disband their police forces, and turn in loving appeal to the law-breakers, what would be thought of their efforts? The question suggests its own answer.

God is the supreme ruler of the universe. He is the strong executive behind the moral law. Were He to refuse to punish the wicked, what would become of the world? It is, then, especially absurd to demand that He should not use coercion on the recalcitrant. As ruler, He must punish when punishment is necessary. If He could not, or did not, His authority would be nil. His mercy is indeed above all His works; He never turns a deaf ear to repentance. But when the sinner first defies law and then turns away from mercy's appeal, there is but one thing to do—punish.

Teach the whole truth. Proclaim the love that en-

dureth forever, the mercy that is never wanting; but also declare that there is punishment for the sinner who will not repent. Give the entire message.

I have referred more than once to the muddled thinking of the present day. I doubt if the modern mind is as confused on any other subject as it is on the nature and attributes of the Deity. In fact, I am convinced that most of the atheism of the present day arises from false ideas of God. The best argument for His existence is a clear and accurate conception of what He is. Unfortunately we do not always find this, even among God's friends.

FASHION IN FAITH

I use the word faith here, as in many other places in this little volume, for acceptance of a doctrine, whether the conviction comes from the word of another or from one's own reasoning. It may, however, be confidently stated that in most cases acceptance as well as denial comes from authority. What do most of those who prate about evolution know of the theory? They simply take up the slogan of the hour and herald it to the world, feeling that at least they are on the popular side.

A distinguished writer, now dead, declared that in his forty years of public life, over forty theories on important matters had come and gone. Some disappear very quickly. Few hear of Bergson today.

Yet, doctrines have their vogue, even as garments. Our love of novelty appears even in our opinions, as though the eternal verities were subject to our caprices!

Some irresponsible individual makes a statement, which may be a joke. A novelty-loving press, catering to a novelty-loving people, gives the startling view publicity, and a new theory is abroad in a day.

We too often forget that truth is not a matter of opinion; that it does not change with the times, nor with the climate. A great First Cause once, a great First Cause forever. So with all the other verities. It is our duty to come humbly to the truth and offer our homage. It is our interest as well as our duty.

Evolution was before Darwin. He popularized it, and, aided by his followers, gave it its vogue. By some vagary of the human mind it became, what it need not have become, atheistic. There is not a particle of reason why a theist may not be an evolutionist, or why an evolutionist may not be a theist. If the desire had been to reach the truth, not to establish libertinism, there need not have been a quarrel between science and religion. I am, however, willing to concede that many of the religionists became needlessly frightened.

When evolution came to be accepted, many of its advocates claimed to see in it a substitute for God. Hence, they associated it with an atheism. Had they seen correctly they would have learned from it a higher conception of the majesty, power and wisdom of the Great First Cause. They saw, however, only superficially; hence, only the view that would dispense with responsibility, and make each one a law unto himself.

They flung freely the accusation of ignorance and obscurantism at all who differed from them. Timid

ones began to regard it as a disgrace to be right. Believers held their peace, not because they accepted the new views, but because they trembled before the avalanche of abuse that poured from evolutionary sources. Often the one that spoke up for the old cause was more heroic than intelligent. Sometimes he was hopelessly uninformed, and was laughed out of court. In this way the atheistic vogue was established. Evolution has sufficient of truth in it to give it standing. No one wishes to deny it this. But why make it atheistic? Why substitute the methods of acting for the actor? There is not a particle of reason for holding that the evolutionary theory dispenses with God. On the contrary, as already said, it, in so far as it is true, but makes our conception of the Deity grander and more sublime.

But the vogue is changing. Atheism has had its day; not, indeed, that there will not be always some who proclaim themselves atheists. But the world is coming to understand that evolution is not necessarily atheistic; that, in fact, each truth discovered makes for a better understanding of the power and wisdom of the great First Cause. Views come and go, but the Truth remains forever.

In saying this I make all possible concession to the claims of the evolutionists. I might, if I so desired, deny, as utterly unproved, much of what is asserted in behalf of evolution. There is today a growing disposition to challenge the findings of what has been considered science. Grave and learned men emphatically reject the Darwinian theory, in many of its moods, as unproved and unprovable. They reject it,

not on religious grounds, but in the interests of true science.

WE NEED GOD

Some one has well said that if there were no God we would find it necessary to create one. This is a forceful, if somewhat absurd, way of expressing a great truth. We need God.

I do not advance this as a proof of God's existence; for such it is not. But I wish to call attention to the fact that this life of ours will, without God, be found to be less and less worthy. In fact as we grow in intelligence and as our lives become more complex, it will be increasingly evident that without God human society becomes less and less satisfactory. Indeed, should things continue in the direction of the last decade a catastrophe can hardly be averted. What is in store for the race no one pretends to know.

This dire need of a God, accepted and obeyed, does not, indeed, prove that He is. But it ought to make us willing to accept proof of His existence, if such proof be forthcoming. This would mean a good deal. For, unfortunately, the greatest evil of the age is not actual disbelief in a Creator, but a decided unwillingness to consider the theistic view. Argument is lost when people refuse to weigh it.

It has been frequently maintained that while ignorant peoples need faith in a divinity, enlightened nations, such as our own, can dispense with the supernatural. Education takes the place of religion. A more careful consideration will show that this is far from the truth.

Looking out upon the world of today we find a condition approaching chaos; and we search for something that can restore order. We have not found it yet.

When disorder breaks out in a city we call in the city authorities, officials whom the contending parties are obliged to recognize. If the matter cannot be composed at once there are the law courts whose jurisdiction all must admit. Should any one refuse to accept the decision of the courts, force is righteously called into operation. Ultimately the disturbance is quieted by an authority which all must recognize. In this way comparative harmony is preserved.

Were there no authority, the conflict would go on until one or other should become exhausted, or until both should realize that it is more to their interests to live in peace.

Necessarily this is a most unsatisfactory condition. For the desire to live in peace may not manifest itself until much harm is done. Moreover, the time may soon come when a new war will appear advantageous to one side or the other. If all question of right be eliminated, then is mankind in a precarious condition.

The nations of the earth have practically banished God from their affairs. Each assumes to be the supreme authority on all matters pertaining to itself. Individuals may be bound by law, but nations are not; except in so far as their weakness compels them to submit. God is not supreme Ruler of nations. Hence, when two of them quarrel they have no common tribunal to pass on the matter.

Unless they voluntarily submit to arbitration in some form they must fight it out. Arbitration, or an international tribunal, works well enough when both parties desire it to work. Should either desire war, war usually comes.

The world today is without a tribunal to which difficulties may be submitted. It has not even a principle which all accept. One seeks in vain for a rallying cry to which all harken. God is banished and the nations are left to themselves. There is no authority to which all offer allegiance. Hence, human society is in the same condition that a village would be in, had it no government, no one to exercise authority. So, it must remain, at least intermittently, until the Ruler is brought back; until the Supreme Law-Giver is again heard and obeyed. When He returns He must come, not merely by courtesy: He must reassume His rightful place in the affairs of men and nations. Otherwise chaos will abide with us; and the more intelligent we are the worse the condition will be.

My conclusion, then, is that, as no community of men can peacefully exist without an authority which all recognize and obey, so no community of nations can peacefully exist without some one who is both law-giver and executive for all. God alone can answer the demands of the situation. I do not pretend that the nations show any disposition to accept Him. My claim is that He is necessary to them, indeed, increasingly necessary; and until He is recognized as the rightful Ruler of men and nations, men and nations must pay the penalty of refusing to accept Him.

A STANDARD IS NECESSARY

We must have a standard of values. The necessity of this appears no matter in what direction we look. The best speakers and writers give us our standard of language. The nearer we conform to the model they give us the more polite our diction.

There is a standard in fashion, not always regulated by utility or common sense. In fact, it may not suit some people at all. Still they must submit to it, no matter how disagreeable it may be. Fashion is the most tyrannical of tyrants; and is as fitful as fate, even worse than a pagan divinity.

Manners, too, have their standard, which is set by those who, for some reason, have come to be recognized as leaders. With people of fashion one is considered a boor, no matter what his character or mental attainment may be, if he cannot conduct himself with ease and grace as society conducts itself. Indeed, we find arbitrary rules in such a real thing as culture. Every phase of life is regulated by a standard, accepted and enforced by those who have secured ascendancy in the matter.

A standard may be based either upon real values or upon convention. The things we have been considering, polite language, fashion, manners, are largely the product of convention; though they may have kernel of real value. But, there are things that can never grow out of any form of agreement. Genuine friendship does not derive its value from vogue, or from the decision of a coterie. It would be still genuine in spite of any adverse opinion, no matter how many or how great those that hold it.

So it is with virtue of any kind. Justice, mercy, truthfulness, and such do not depend upon a majority vote. They shine just as radiantly when trampled upon by the great. Driven from the mart and the forum, they live in retirement, but are ready to re-assert their rights at the first opportunity.

As the value of virtue does not depend upon human convention, neither does it necessarily make for utility. The highest virtue is not always profitable. In fact the less profitable the higher it may be. It becomes heroic only when it involves sacrifice.

If then virtue's standard is not derived from human convention, from popular opinion or from utility, whence is it? Some have thought that it derives its worth from the pleasure it gives. But I doubt if any conscientious man or woman today holds such a degrading view of virtue. Nor will any conscientious man or woman be satisfied to see in virtue only what humans can bestow upon it. They will expect to find in that which they esteem as virtuous something independent of man's view. Virtue makes the man, not man the virtue.

If, then, virtue does not derive its essence or its standard from man, whence are they? There is but one possible answer: Virtue is from Him from Whom all morality springs: from the Author of our being Who in giving us our being, gave us also the laws by which that being may strive towards its perfection. Virtue consists in our conforming ourselves to that Divine Will, and in becoming more and more like to Him Who is the source of all good. The more we make ourselves like to Him the more virtuous we

are. There is no other standard: No God, no virtue. Every increase in virtue means a step nearer to the source, the standard. Atheism makes virtue impossible, for it eliminates the source and the standard. It takes away the only absolute being, who can by any possibility be the measure of human excellence; the only being whose will can be a criterion for all. If men set up a standard it is because they, consciously or unconsciously, believe in God. If He be not, then is all our reckoning false.

V

ATHEISM'S DEVASTATION

NO GOD, NO CHRISTIANITY

WHATEVER the attitude of some Christians today, it can hardly be denied that Christianity is based upon a belief in God. I doubt if the extremest atheist will contradict this statement. For evidence arises from all sides—from tradition, literature and a million monuments—to show that a belief in God is the foundation of that great religious system which we call Christian.

Not only is this religion based on belief in God, but our civilization rests upon the same foundation. Morality, the law of civilized nations, the administration of justice, all our eleemosynary institutions, our ideas of home, of duties to parents, of duties to civil and religious authorities; in fact, whatever is high and holy in our lives, in our thinking, comes from our acceptance of a supreme Lord of the universe, One who is also Law-Giver and Judge.

In the strength of this belief and teaching, Christianity overcame all opposition, and attracted to itself what was best in the human family; and, today, counts its adherents by hundreds of millions. Can it be that this massive structure, this mighty empire, the only righteous empire, rests upon a false foundation? Is there naught but error beneath it all? If so, then

Nero and the other persecutors were right, and the only pity is that they were not able to complete their work!

I invite the denier and the doubter to look at that vast and goodly edifice which we call Christianity, consider its noble and exalted teaching,—the one teaching fit to give man a correct view of his own dignity; the one teaching fit to show him the way in which he should walk,—and see if after all the whole structure rests upon a vast chasm. If mankind can accomplish so much with only error for its inspiration, we must regard our existence here as baffling indeed.

I have already said that Christianity rests upon a belief in God. I may now add that as a religion—and to be a religion is its primary purpose—its chief, if not its sole aim, is to worship a Deity. If then there be no Deity, Christianity should be wiped out, even though civilization go with it!

To deny God means also to dismiss Christ. For no matter how wise the latter's teaching, no matter how beautiful His example, or how pathetic His end,—His career and teaching are vitiated, His judgment discredited, by the fact that He constantly spoke of a Deity; who, we are now told, never did exist! But the business of robbing us of all that is worth while in life is a favourite one with the atheist! He sees all our hopes vanish, and sheds no tears!

If some one should reply that Christianity has paid more attention to Christ than to God, the answer is obvious. It honoured Christ believing Him to be God. This is easily established.

I conclude, then, that if there be no God, Christianity is without a foundation, and the whole Christian edifice, with all it includes, is based upon a falsehood. Hence, Christianity goes, and with it Christian civilization.

NO GOD, NO FUTURE LIFE

If there be no future life, human existence is without explanation. We labour and suffer through years of trial, and then go out into nowhere.

Something, whatever it is, has given us a strong desire to live on in a future state. We instinctively shrink from the thought of ceasing to be. Yet, if there be no future life, we are hastening on to the annihilation of that which we esteem best in us, even the soul!

If there be anything that can reconcile us to the decay of our faculties and the approach of death, it is the hope that these faculties will be renewed and perfected in another existence. We are thus led to look not on the grave, but beyond it. Take away this prospect, and there is left us but a choice between wretchedness and nothingness.

As a matter of fact, those who, without hope of a future life, find themselves declining, take refuge in forgetfulness of both the present and the future. They object to being told that death is near. Neither friend nor physician dare make known to them the facts. So general is this condition of mind that the average doctor is amazed to find a patient who is willing to be told that the end is at hand. Self-deception and the honeyed words of family and

physician are the only balm left the last days of those who accept not belief in a future existence.

Surely, it will not be maintained that this is a wholesome condition. Nor will it be said that it is worthy of man. To hide from ourselves facts that so intimately concern us is certainly a perversion. We ought to know, but we are afraid to know. Why? Simply because we do not believe in that future life which alone can satisfy our irrepressible longing, and which alone can explain and justify this life. The longing is universal, though some people try to deceive themselves with the belief that it is not.

Belief in a future life is demanded as an inspiration to heroic action here. It would, indeed, be little short of madness to risk the present existence, in behalf of any cause, if beyond the grave there were naught but a bleak void. Why hasten by magnanimous action the annihilation from which every human being shrinks!

I may be told that many non-believers manifest the most splendid heroism in moments of difficulty. I have no desire to deny a fact, which may be easily enough accounted for. Inherited disposition, habits of thought, the example of others, human applause,—these often prompt men to deeds of valour. Perhaps, too, men who have no hope of a future existence grow contemptuous of life here. Or, they may feel that atheists, being in the minority and propagating an unpopular doctrine, would injure their cause by any manifestation of cowardice. Explain the condition as you may, the fact remains, that those who do not hope for a future life are foolish to throw away the smallest portion of this, if they esteem it at all.

It may be argued that general commendation, the esteem and gratitude of one's fellow men, are compensation enough for any sacrifice one may be called upon to make. But many die in the performance of the heroic act—what of them?

You say they will be held in grateful remembrance by the public. I wish that those who think there is compensation in this would ask themselves, the next time they attend a funeral, if the corpse is at all interested in the eulogy of the preacher. And if not now, will it be later, when it has crumbled into union with mother earth? Eulogies may comfort the living, but they bring no happiness to the clay that lies motionless. That which might be comforted has, in the opinion of those who deny a future existence, ceased to be. Hence, the conviction that those who die heroically will be compensated by the gratitude of posterity, is based upon belief in a future life, and has no rational right to existence if all ends with the grave. Some one may tell me that, while a future life is necessary, it need not be an eternal life. My answer is that the argument here advanced does not demand an eternal life, but only such a duration as will give opportunity for rewarding those who have lived and died nobly. We have to turn to other considerations for proof that the future life is eternal. However, this does not enter my present scope.

Whether the future life be temporary or eternal, it must be ruled by a wise and just intelligence. If the ruler be not intelligent, those who enter the life beyond are utterly at the mercy of chance. If it be not a wise intelligence, it will make blunders. If it be not

a just intelligence, the good may be in a worse condition than if chance ruled the situation. So, an intelligence, wise and just, is demanded that heroism, or even ordinary virtue, may receive due compensation in the next life. This is obvious. The very reasons that demand a future life, demand that its presiding genius be intelligent, wise and just. I am not saying that this argument requires that the genius be God; one less than infinite in perfection might meet the requirements. But he must be of such calibre that he understands the minds and hearts of all human beings; he must be rich and powerful enough to be able to compensate all according to their respective merits; and he must be so fair in his distribution of compensation that no one will be denied what he is entitled to. Otherwise, human existence is a misery and a deception, and those who would restrict or destroy it are friends of all.

NO GOD, NO MIRACLE

I do not think that enlightened and fair-minded historians take the responsibility of sweepingly denying the supernatural. The raising of Lazarus and the resurrection of Christ are so well authenticated that an intelligent publicist will at least hesitate before challenging the accepted views on these historic events.

Similarly, we have such testimony to other happenings, that one who has pondered the statements made by scientific men can hardly muster up courage to deny what has been so definitely asserted. To insist that nothing beyond the power of human agency has

occurred anywhere, is to flout evidence of the most unexceptional character.

Without extending our survey to include many facts, whose historicity cannot be challenged, we may confidently affirm that, except all human testimony fails, the world has known occurrences that are not the work of any earthly agency. Miracles have happened.

But, if we are to accept atheistic evolution, and hence deny a personal God, no miracle has occurred, for the simple reason that no miracle could have occurred. Lazarus was not called from the tomb, Christ did not rise from the dead, and other well authenticated marvels are but the clever work of legerdemain. Miracle goes, as God goes. Indeed, all that men have believed and hoped and loved—Christianity, civilization, art, literature, heroism—whatever has cheered or ennobled man through the ages, passes away, dissipated by the lurid light of atheistic evolution. Verily, atheism is both daring and drastic; a Juggernaut crushing all that men have held dear, and demolishing the very foundations of the edifice which mankind has builded in tears and in hope!

NO GOD, NO FREE WILL

Atheistic philosophy has no love for the contention that the human will is a free agent. The reason for this opposition is easily discovered.

Matter has no choice. In similar circumstances it will always act in the same way. All our experiments, indeed, all our movements, pre-suppose this truth. Matter neither deliberates nor chooses. And

if it has not the power of choice, it cannot possibly develop it in, or bestow it upon, anything else.

Plants and animals, though possessed of life, are without power of self-determination. They neither cogitate about what may be done, nor reflect upon what has been done. If animals are not deterred or prevented, they go straight to the object of their desire. They cannot resolve now that they will do something tomorrow, or even one minute hence. On the other hand, man can plan for a year, and even change his plan.

We are aware that conditions may arise to interfere with free will even in humans. Passion, habit, lack of self-control, limit, though they seldom destroy, freedom. And, even when they do destroy it, it is but for the moment.

We know we can do, or refuse to do. We can go out or stay in; work or remain idle. In practice, no one questions his ability to choose. It is only when he wishes to be philosophical that even the materialist has any doubts about his freedom.

Often, after having done a thing, we regret that we did not leave it undone. We are sorry and sometimes seized with remorse, because of what we now regard as having been a foolish or even a wicked step. Why should we concern ourselves, except on the supposition that we were free, and, therefore, could have refrained from doing the thing?

But, perhaps, you may say that we could not refrain either from the deed or from the remorse. We are victims of fate which forces us to do things and then makes us fret and worry because of our having done

them. The lower animals are not tortured in this way.

We punish people for committing what we call crime, which, in the materialistic hypothesis, they could not have avoided. This is justifiable only on the principle that we cannot help punishing them. The so-called criminal has committed no crime at all; the so-called judge has not judged, but has merely acted from irresistible impulse, and the poor hangman hangs, not because hanging is good, but because it is in him!

We are, let us say, severely bumped in an accident, and though at first we are wrothy enough, we soon learn that it could not be helped; and we, therefore, forgive. Another one deliberately strives to kill us, but misses his aim. We are genuinely angry with him, and unless we are especially mild, we find it hard to forgive.

Here we have two situations. In one we are hurt but bear no malice; in the other we are not hurt, but yet meditate revenge. How could this happen unless on the supposition that the second party determined to injure us? If he were not free he could not have so resolved. We concede his freedom by being angry with him.

I have already referred to the things that limit freedom. I would add here that it is not necessary for any argument to maintain that liberty may not be limited or destroyed, sometimes. If we can prove that man is free at any time or under any circumstances, we prove that there is at least one thing in the world that matter cannot give, freedom. Hence, there must be an agency that is not dependent upon matter,

an agency that can bestow freedom, and which, therefore, must itself be free. This, of course, matter can never be.

FAMILY AFFECTION UNEXPLAINED

In the animal world the strongest affection binds dam and sire to offspring. Either will suffer any hardship, brave any danger, in defense of its young. The devotion of the parent even surpasses the intelligence it manifests in bringing up its brood.

But it does not appear that this devotion is at all reciprocal. The offspring sees in dam and sire naught but providers. The affection it shows will be bestowed upon a companion. In other words, the young animal goes to the parent for its wants and nothing more; and, further, when it is no longer in need of anything, the parent seems to mean nothing to it.

What is still stranger, the heroic parent, once prepared to face any enemy in defence of offspring, soon casts its young off, and perhaps even drives it out of the vicinity. When dependence ceases there is no more affection, no more recognition of relationship.

See how different it is with the human. Neither father nor mother ever loses devotion to a child. Affection continues, not only through the years of the child's dependence, but to the end.

Similarly, filial devotion, unless some perversity intervene, does not diminish. Though the child has ceased to need the parent, and when even he is called upon to support the parent, affection does not grow less, but greater. Also, when death separates parent and child the same feeling continues. If they are

believers, devotion follows the departed one to another life; if not believers, the memory of the one who has ceased to be is treasured as a priceless inheritance.

Can materialism explain a relationship that has nothing to correspond to it among animals inferior to man? If man have not an existence beyond things material, if he have not a spirit that transcends anything to be found elsewhere in this world, there is no accounting for the phenomena mentioned. There must be a spiritual life and, therefore, a great spirit whom we name God. The inference may not be obvious at first, but it is irresistible on adequate consideration.

NO GOD, NO PRAYER

A short while ago I witnessed the presentation of the old morality play—Everyman. The most solemn moment came when the principal character knelt to make earnest appeal to God in whom she believed.

Few in the audience accepted Everyman's faith. Probably many had no faith at all. But I doubt if one of those present remained unmoved.

I have witnessed similar occurrences in Mohammedan lands. A follower of the Prophet spreads his prayer-mat on the desert sand, or on the deck of a ship. He quite forgets those about him and is indifferent to comment. But there is no comment. Christian and Jew, infidel and atheist, all show that they are touched. There is not the least manifestation of frivolity. Silence akin to awe prevails.

You may dismiss all this as a trifle, or as a mani-

festation of human weakness and superstition. Very well, but will you deny that a thing so universal, a feeling that has such hold on unsophisticated human nature, may be dismissed as of no moment? Can that which is so strongly instinctive in us be false? If so, we ought to be on our guard against anything that touches us profoundly!

NO GOD, NO GOVERNMENT

When I speak of government I have in mind one of right, not of mere force. Force is its own explanation, and its own title. Its great weakness lies in the fact that it must bow to greater force. It has no standing before the tribunal of righteousness. We owe it nothing except what prudence dictates.

We ask, then, what is it that makes government righteous? What gives it its claim upon us?

Some will answer, tradition. We find government here; our fathers submitted to it, and we follow in their footsteps.

Clearly this answer will not do. In an age of innovation, an age in which everything is challenged, in which old views of religion and life are so readily discarded, it will hardly suffice to say that we accept government simply because our ancestors accepted it. We must find some other reason.

This is furnished us by those who hold that government rests upon popular suffrage. Government based on the consent of the governed is the American motto.

Unfortunately, this theory is beset with many difficulties. We might in the first place ask, upon what

is the principle founded? Is there anything in law, human or divine, which can give a sure foundation for such a view? It will be difficult, nay, impossible, to find it. Hence, we have nothing but assumption and assertion to support the contention that government derives its authority from consent.

Further, very few governments have ever sought the consent of the governed. Were all that did not seek it without authority? If they were, the world scarcely ever had a legitimate government. Not one of our codes of law grew out of the popular voice.

When we speak of the will of the people we usually mean the will of the majority of the people. Whence does a majority derive the right of lording it over a minority? What gives them the power they claim? Force? Force does not establish legitimate authority.

Again, is what we call a majority really such? Whence comes the right to hold that a majority of males over twenty-one is a majority of the whole people? We have no such right, even though all males voted, which they seldom do.

Sometimes an election is carried by fraud; voters are deceived by campaign lies; many voters do not know for whom or for what they are voting. Does any one hold that a majority of males, who often vote ignorantly, and sometimes because of bribes or promises, can establish a righteous government which all must respect and obey?

Some have held that government derives its power from a contract which each is supposed to have made with all. This foolish theory is now generally abandoned, and rightly.

First of all, a contract is not to be presumed, but to be proved. There is no evidence that either party ever made such contract, even tacitly. And even if it could be shown that both did, since there is no one above them to enforce the contract, either may withdraw from it at will. There are many other difficulties which need not be dwelt on here. Enough has been said to show that the "social contract" is absurd and meaningless.

Others have maintained that there is a contract between government and the governed, whereby the latter surrenders a portion of their liberty in exchange for the protection which the former offers.

This theory has all the bad features of the other. There is no evidence that such a contract exists; and, if it did exist, there is no authority to enforce it. Either could recede from it at pleasure.

The theories so far advanced encounter another difficulty: All governments assume the right of imposing the death penalty. From what source is this right derived?

Some one will answer, from the contract. But can anyone contract his life away? Can he validly consent that it be taken from him? If he can do either, it must be because he has jurisdiction over his own life. If he have not, how can he transfer it to another? If he have such jurisdiction, he has a right to commit suicide whenever he pleases. I do not think that any government concedes this right. Yet, if one has not a right over his life he cannot grant it to another. And if a man cannot surrender his own life he cannot surrender the life of any one else. Neither

can any number of men. We have no jurisdiction over other lives.

It follows, then, that no government, claiming to derive its authority from men, can put any one to death ; unless it admits that its citizens or subjects are justified in suiciding whenever they please.

I urge this against the assumption that a government may receive from one something that he himself has not got. As a matter of fact I hold as evident that if there be no God, any one may suicide whenever he desires to do so. Governments do not admit this, even when they claim to derive their authority from those whom they rule. There is inconsistency somewhere.

Examine all the theories that can be put forth regarding the possibility of government resting ultimately on human will, and you will find they all fail. If there be no foundation other than what man can give, anarchism stands triumphant. If authority have not God behind it it is at best a tyranny which no one is morally obliged to respect or obey. Legitimate government does not exist. We can have nothing more than a temporary arrangement which any one may reject without notice. No God, No Government.

But human society cannot exist without government: and man cannot attain to happiness, comfort or well being without human society. Apart from human society he becomes a cave man, doomed to extinction. Hence, without God, no government, no human society, no worthy existence. This is the inevitable consequence of atheism, if pushed to its logical conclusion.

To escape these dire consequences we must accept God, who created human society; and, in order that it might thrive, gave to it the right of establishing government that should function with His authority, and share in the power that is His. Government, then properly established and acting within its rights, holds its authority from God. He who resists it resists the ordinance of God.

It matters not whether the people establish or merely accept the government, it matters not whether authority rests in the hands of one or many, government lawfully existing and lawfully exercising its authority, represents God, and enjoys rights which only He can bestow. There is no other explanation of government. The authority thus divinely given may either first be bestowed upon people who have a right to transfer it to whom they choose; or it may be given directly by God to those whom the people have chosen. There is no practical difference between the two views. In either case power comes from God, Who alone can bestow it. I repeat, No God, No Government.

So, the destructive influence of atheism extends to every human interest. It leaves nothing standing. Everything that men love, everything that orderly life demands, whatever is necessary to individual or social well-being, goes down in utter collapse before this all-destroying pestilence. Why men cling to it, why they desire to propagate it, must ever remain a puzzle. Even if it were true, it is so ruinous, so pernicious, so chaotic, so utterly deplorable, that men should draw the curtain of forgetfulness over its dread and hideous visage.

VI

FURTHER DESTRUCTION

DÉSPAIR

IF there be no God, then are we orphans, indeed. This would, of course, give us such freedom as the Prodigal Son had after he separated himself from his father's house. We could follow our own bent, minding only the civil law, the rules of health and such conventionalities as the set to which we belong imposed.

The civil law would not limit our freedom much, for it interferes with us only to a very small extent. Those who pay their taxes, commit no violence and avoid indecencies in public, can manage to get along very well with the secular authorities. A man may be very wicked without falling foul of the civil law.

Nor, need the question of health bother an intelligent man very much. It is only a weakling or an ignoramus that wounds his own health. There is greater and more prolonged enjoyment in abstaining from excess. The experienced libertine will never depart to any alarming extent from the laws of physical well-being. He is always a man of decorum. He sedulously eliminates from his viciousness whatever savours of grossness and whatever might seriously shorten his period of enjoyment. By a method, deliberately thought out, he can indulge his desires with-

out gravely hurting himself; and, if perchance, he should do himself bodily or mental injury, whose business is it? Since there is no God above, and no one depending upon him, may he not dispose of himself as he pleases? What right has any one, especially what right have those who have banished God, to interfere with his disposition of himself? It would of course be better if he acted otherwise; but since he has freely chosen this course for himself, who has any right to object?

As for the demands of a social set, there is nothing in the world more easily disposed of. The companions a man chooses are all usually after his own model; and if they should not be, it is easy to make a change.

So, with God out of the way, without a Sovereign Ruler to demand an account and to inflict punishment, there is no reason why a man may not indulge his fancy in perfect security. I shall not make the accusation, which would not be true, that all atheists are sybarites; but I can very well understand that those who do not believe in God may feel more free than the young man who has abandoned home to escape its restraints.

However, the time came when the poor prodigal found himself a wretched outcast. And the time may come in the life of an atheist when the outlook is drear, indeed. When life is hurrying to its close, when the grave is opening to receive the wanderer, when no ray of light illumines the expanse beyond the grave, the situation becomes tragic. The mind may wander back to a youth of expectation; to a later

determination to accomplish something, to a pride which spurred one on to make for himself a name. Now all opportunities have passed, a feeble mind functions in a feeble body, the past has proved altogether unsatisfactory, and the future does not exist. Why this life at all? Were it not better that it had never come? Verily, present existence without a future life is scarcely a boon. The present writer has often heard men in their decline declare so.

It is hardly conceivable that there could be a future life without God. But if there should be, matters would be worse still. Who likes the prospect of setting out alone for an unknown shore? There can hardly be a condition more dreadful than to be cast alone upon the open sea not knowing to what hostile shore one may be borne.

THE MORAL LAW GOES

I presume that most men admit a moral law, a law extending far beyond the limits of any human enactment. Human codes, after all, cover but very little of our lives. Few of our actions, and scarcely any of our thoughts, fall under the scrutiny of man. And if one should seek a desert place, abandoning the haunts of men, no man-made law would follow him. For all such laws are made for society, and this he has forsaken.

Yet, who would say that a rational being is exempt from law under any circumstances? No matter where we find ourselves, our own consciences, as well as the consciences of mankind, hold that there are things we may not do, things that are essentially

wrong. But, unless an action is forbidden by some law, it cannot be wrong.

Some may say that certain things are forbidden by what we owe ourselves. "What we owe ourselves" is, I believe, a figure of speech. "To owe" requires two persons, a debtor and a creditor. In accurate speaking, we cannot owe ourselves anything; and, if we did, we as creditors could remit what we as debtors owe. It is always within the right of a creditor to forgive a debt. As a matter of fact, then, speaking correctly, we owe ourselves nothing.

It follows, therefore, that if any obligation hang over a man living in a desert island it must come from a law-giver who is not the man himself, and who is not human society.

There must be a law-giver whose will regulates thoughts, words and actions which human society does not and cannot take cognizance of. If there be not, the moral law is a figment, and men who aim at obeying it are deceived. The best of the human family is and has been hopelessly in error.

I admit that it would be better for a man to lead the kind of life, that we call upright, no matter where his lot be cast. We would most certainly advise him to do so. But this would be giving him counsel, not imposing a law.

Some one will say that conscience has its dictates, and conscience goes with people everywhere they go. To this I answer that, conscience is but the echo of a higher law, the law of the Creator; and if there be no Creator, conscience simply gives a false alarm.

Besides, conscience is considerably a matter of

training and, therefore differs in people. Even in the same person, it changes, and sometimes almost ceases to act.

But there is a moral sense. This, I take it, is rather an instinctive thing, depending upon family or racial characteristics, and somewhat upon training, age, and other influences. If there be any element of the permanent in it, something that is found in all peoples and in every moral individual, it is very indefinite, and its authority may be fairly challenged.

If, for instance, one has an opportunity of appropriating something that does not belong to him, and his resolve to act is checked by a natural honesty which training may have developed, he may argue with himself in this manner: This shrinking of mine comes from ancestors who believed in God, and from the influence of parents and teachers who believed in God. Their belief to me is superstition. Why should I be bound by it? Perhaps it would be better to leave the goods with their owner. So society says. But there is no proof that society has any right to bind me. Why should I care about it? Men may say that it would be better not to touch the goods. I know I would be better off if I had them. Why then should I hesitate?

Can you, dear reader, give this man any compelling reason why he should not take the property, if you reject the God who uttered His edict, "Thou shalt not steal"? It would of course be better if he did not. But we are looking for law, not for mere recommendation.

Or, we will suppose another situation which may

be even more to the point. In the case of theft, the one who is robbed may be considered reasonably unwilling to have his property taken. We shall imagine a condition in which no one is unwilling to bear his part.

An autonomous community resolves upon promiscuous living. If individuals object they receive compensation for property and leave. The sentiment of those remaining is unanimous. There is neither force nor violence. All enter whole-heartedly into the new arrangement. They do not believe in God, hence the law of the land is the only law for them. They are living according to that law, for they themselves have made it. Are you satisfied? If not, why not?

You say the community will die out. Let it. Is there any obligation, apart from God, to keep it alive? What does it owe posterity, particularly as there will not be any posterity. Nor is it unreasonable to hold that, if there be no God, it were better there should not be posterity. Why bring into existence human beings who must suffer without hope? I conclude, then, that if there be no God, the moral law is a figment which, of course, is without binding force. If this view startle you, it is because atheism is chaotic no matter from what point it is viewed.

THE MORAL LAW WITHOUT SANCTION

It is, I believe, an accepted and universal principle that law must have a sanction; otherwise it avails not. The wisest enactment fails if it neglect to provide punishment for those who violate it.

Leaving out of consideration what Christians hold

about the positive will of God, the moral law occupies the highest place in human affairs. In fact, all law may be said to derive its authority from it.

We have already seen that civil legislation touches our lives but occasionally. Yet we are always, as rational beings, under law. This can be no other than the moral law.

But, if it be in the true sense a law, as it necessarily is, there must be a system of rewards and punishments by which it may be enforced.

We shall see later that there is no evidence that transgressions against the moral law are generally punished here. We have seen that there are instances in which they cannot be adequately punished in this life. What so often appears punishment of sin is the penalty of folly, or of the violation of physical laws, or the conventions of human society.

Hence, it follows that were there no future life the moral law would be without adequate sanction,—therefore no law at all. That universal guide, conscience, which goes with rational beings wherever they go, would be dismissed as a bugbear or a superstition, an ogre that for ages has been terrorizing mankind. The future life, which this law demands as its sanction, requires God, if matters are not to be worse still, beyond the grave.

If the punishment of wickedness or the violation of the moral law demands a future life presided over by God, as assuredly it does, the due reward of virtuous or heroic action also demands it. If there be no God and no future life, what is to become of those who make the supreme sacrifice for the good of others?

The hero who dies in an effort to rescue women and children from a burning building receives no compensation here. Hence, if there be no hereafter, he receives no reward of any kind.

I conclude, therefore, that without a future life, presided over by a wise, just and intelligent Being, the moral law is without a sanction, and is therefore no law at all.

SIN IS NOT ALWAYS PUNISHED HERE

It would be false to deny that it is ever so punished. When and how often we do not know, but it appears that at least sometimes wrong-doing receives some chastisement even here.

But to infer from this that sin is always punished in this world, either adequately or inadequately, would be to draw a wholly unwarranted conclusion. Those who reach such a conviction can hardly be said to come to it by any process of reasoning. They are borne to it by some striking event, or, perhaps, are, consciously or unconsciously, resolved to dismiss the possibility of suffering beyond the grave. It is truly wonderful what flimsy arguments satisfy us when they harmonize with our desires.

When we come to study the situation closely, we discover overwhelming reasons against the view that sin invariably finds its punishment here. To begin with, Christians generally hold that there are sins which merit eternal punishment, which obviously cannot be inflicted here. Then, there is nothing to show that the sun does not shine and the rain does not fall indifferently upon just and unjust. Indeed, it is often

said that, all in all, the wicked have frequently the better of it in this life. A very high authority says that the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light.

Usually, when we speak of sin being punished in this life we have in mind, not an occasional transgression, but a long reckless course of wrong-doing. People who continue in sin are generally discovered and disgraced, finally. But if this be the only punishment, there would have been none at all had they desisted from sin a little earlier; or had they died before being discovered. It may even be that a little precaution, or moderation in evil-doing, would have saved them all trouble. Clearly, then, affliction in this life comes in a most haphazard manner, and is not always the penalty of guilt. Generally speaking it is not sin but unwisdom or folly that is punished here. The cunning transgressor may go a long way before he is discovered; and even when found out, it is not always the moral fault that is punished. Hence when we speak of sin being duly punished in this life we speak from a confused condition of mind. If the punishment be inflicted by the state, it is not the *sin* which is an offense against God, but the misdemeanor or crime, which is an offense against the law, that is punished.

Again, when we see an old *roue*' afflicted with aches and pains, or in dire need, we say that he is being punished for the sins of his youth. This is clearly an unwarranted assertion. For, what the man is being punished for is not sin, but a defiance of the laws of health and economy.

Similarly, when one, after bearing a good name through many years, suddenly falls into disgrace, because of some transgression or series of transgressions which hitherto he had been able to conceal, we are apt to conclude that his sins have found him out and are now bent on punishing him. Here again I have to challenge the conclusion. The man is not being punished for his sins, but for his defiance of social convention. It is as a crime against public order or decorum that his act is punished. If I desired to be sarcastic I might say that he is being punished for the sin of being found out.

Should some insist that at any rate he is being punished for being wicked, I would ask: for what are his innocent wife and children being punished? Obviously, their suffering is little, if at all, less than his. It may be even greater. For, not infrequently, the discovery brings them the agonizing conviction that they have for years been trusting one who is false. If sin is punished in this life, why should innocent relatives and friends, who have not shared in the sin, be involved in the penalty? The present writer has known instances in which the one, who had been a Jekyll and Hyde, had passed away before his dual character had been discovered. His ears were closed to human gossip before busy tongues began to take liberties with his name; while wife and children remained to bear the humiliation and the disgrace which he had brought upon them. If punishment be inflicted generally in this life, the agency that inflicts it is often either blind or deliberately unjust.

One need not delve deeply into history, nor canvass

thoroughly personal experience, to discover that often the truly good are woefully afflicted. It may even be that a very considerable majority of the sorely tried are not suffering through any fault of their own. Many, indeed, suffer because of ignorance, which I hope no one will consider a sin.

It will, I think, appear that there is no evidence to show that men are punished, as a rule, in this life for their sins. Hence, the majority of transgressions must go unpunished, if there be not a future life. And, I presume, no one who does not believe in God, considers a future life possible, or desirable.

If, then, transgression be not always adequately punished here, and we have seen that it is not, the moral law demands a future life, controlled by One who is Lord of the world. That sin is occasionally punished here does not weaken our position. For proper order demands that no guilty one shall escape. Should guilt ever claim immunity the government of the moral world would break down.

I conclude, then, that there is absolutely no proof that sin is, as a rule, punished in this life. That it is sometimes we not only concede but affirm; that it is always, we absolutely deny. Nor, may we forget that the graver sins, which usually give one an evil reputation, cannot, according to Christian teaching, be adequately punished in this life.

CAN VIRTUE BE ITS OWN REWARD?

Virtue certainly brings peace of mind and gives a calm confidence that can come from no other source. The *Milk-white Hind* "feared no evil for it knew no

sin." This form of confidence comes not only from the active exercise of virtue, but from the absence of transgression. In other words, the negatively good—if there be any such—may experience it.

Beyond this, noble souls are usually thrilled when it is given them to accomplish something of an heroic nature. Should they survive the effort, they feel what appears compensation for the risk they have taken, in the consciousness of having achieved something great. This, however, is a short-lived sensation, as it ought to be.

To yield to the charm of praise or fame is always a dangerous weakness; one that has often led to pitiable results. The sooner the whole matter is dismissed the better.

It is natural that man should find comfort in the thought that he has accomplished some good. But it is easy enough to allow this feeling to develop into vanity or self-complacency, neither of which is desirable. On the whole, the better type of man does not ruminate much on the good he has accomplished. The hero who is modest is superior to the one who proclaims his greatness. Hence, the effort to get much out of the noble achievement one may have reached, is not particularly noble. From this it follows that, the ones who get most out of consideration of their achievements are not of the highest type. The truly great man is glad when good is done, no matter who does it. Hence, the contention that a good deed is its own reward does not bear examination. Even when the hero lives to hear his praises sounded, or to feel his heart expanding at the thought of what

he has done, still modesty, not self-complacency, is the virtue he should practice. There is much more of weakness than of strength in satisfaction that is born of heroism. Virtue, then, is not its own reward, and when it tries to be it ceases to be virtue.

Further, there are occasions when the hero dies in the performance of a noble deed. Where is his reward if there be no future life?

VII

ABOUT MATTER

WHENCE IS IT?

TAKING things about us—the earth, the solar system, the universe—as we see them, we naturally ask, whence are they? The scientist, feeling that the answer must come from him, tells us that all we see originates in lower and less differentiated forms. In fact, he says that if we push the inquiry back it will appear that whatever is came from a shapeless mass, from something that filled space as a cloud might, anyway, from matter in its simplest form. Some give other explanations.

It does not concern our argument to inquire, for instance, whether the thing called primordial matter ever had real existence; nor are we concerned as to whether the nebular theory is the right one or not. We are willing to take matter in any form, or even without form, if such be possible. Our only quest is for the something out of which the world of today is made. Present it as you think it has been, and we ask, whence is it?

There are two possible answers: (1) It never came into being, but always was; (2) it was brought into existence by some agency equal to the task of producing it. I am unable to see that there can be a third explanation. The choice, then, lies between eternal

matter and its production by some power. Let us see whether or not the true explanation lies in the acceptance of eternal matter.

I am aware that many good theists admit the possibility of an eternal matter; on the principle, that God, Who is eternal, could have created it from all eternity. None of them (the theists) of course do or can admit self-existing matter, whether eternal or of limited existence. Nor, do I think that, while admitting the possibility of eternal matter, any of them concedes that matter, as we see it, is actually eternal.

But we are concerned not so much with what is admitted as with what the facts really are.

We have already considered the question of the Infinite and the Eternal. There is the eternal proper, which is the ever *now*; which knows neither succession, change of state, beginning, nor end. Clearly matter, the world about us, is not eternal in this sense. For it certainly knows change and is marked by development, succession of states and conditions.

But, there is the eternal, improperly so called, which means the endless possibility of adding to time. In this sense, Christians regard the future life of the human soul as eternal. In their view the soul never dies. Is matter eternal in this sense?

First of all, be it remembered, that we are dealing with the past, with the beginning of things. The past is fixed. We cannot go beyond the beginning and proceed to add indefinitely to it—proceed to reach back and back and back. This would be to stultify ourselves. The only way we can add to the fixed past is to wait until the slowly coming future increases the

volume. Here and now—at any here and now—the past is fixed, and here and now cannot be added to.

But let us concede—improbable though the concession be—that matter is eternal in the limited and improper sense. What then? It goes back through countless ages to a beginning which is a stopping-point at which we pause to draw breath, but is really not a beginning. Let the scientists be our guide through the labyrinths.

Some of them tell us, in their modesty, that this earth of ours is hundreds of thousands of years old, some say millions of years, some billions. We shall not stint them. Though they are not in agreement, we still honour their views. In fact, we are willing to concede them billions, trillions, quadrillions, etc. But we advise them that there is still incalculable time between their reckoning and eternity, even imperfect eternity. If the world came into existence at the time indicated by them it is not eternal. There are unreckoned ages away beyond their beginning.

The scientists also tell us that certain changes have taken place in the last few years,—that, for instance, man has come into existence perhaps not more than a million years ago, or it may not be more than one hundred thousand years ago. In fact, they do admit that change is still going on, and that we may have something better than man, in the next fifty thousand years. They forget that if matter be eternal, even in the restricted sense, all these changes, though their name be legion, would have taken place innumerable ages since. The advent of man would have occurred

in a past so remote that the longest life would be too short to express it in figures.

So it would seem that matter is not eternal. Otherwise, its movements, as we know them up to date, would be buried in a past so remote that the time given geological periods would know nothing of them.

The conclusion is then forced upon us that matter is not eternal, but came into being at a time which, compared even to imperfect eternity, is recent.

How did it come into being? By chance, which is nothing? Did it create itself? This would imply that it undertook the colossal task of bringing itself into being before it had any existence!

It follows then that matter, first matter, comes from some power, whatever it may be, that was able to call it forth from nothing. There is no other possible explanation of our world as it is or as it was. All other efforts at explaining only run more deeply into absurdity the more you consider them.

It is, of course, possible, to imagine matter as remaining in a state of absolute rest for innumerable ages, and then suddenly awakening into activity. Having thus begun operations, it gradually produced the changes, some of which occurred at a comparatively recent date.

However, against such an assumption, is the universally recognized fact that matter is inert; and, therefore, utterly unable to put itself in motion. It can neither stop of itself when moving, nor arouse itself when quiescent. If, therefore, it were for one second motionless it would require some force outside itself to stir it to activity. Hence, the supposition

that after remaining motionless for any period, be it long or short, matter became active is absurd.

If someone should object that, according to our views, God remained inactive from eternity, and then, at some particular moment resolved to create, we answer: God was never inactive. Indeed, the scholastics referred to Him as *most pure act*. From all eternity He willed creation, but willed it to come in time, as it did. He did not become more active in creating, but simply produced the result at the time fixed upon from eternity. Surely, inert matter could not act in this manner.

Consequently, the view that matter is eternal is contradicted by everything we know of the subject. It must have come into being, not through chance which is nothing, nor through its own efforts—for like other things it must exist before it begins to work—but through some outside agency capable of producing it.

In brief then our argument is: Matter itself, in its every mood testifies to the fact that it is not eternal, but came into being at some time. Be that time quintillions or sextillions of years ago, it is still immeasurably removed from even imperfect eternity. It still speaks of an assignable beginning, which would utterly dispose of the idea of eternity. Further, if, by some impossibility, matter could be regarded as eternal, the changes which admittedly have taken place in comparatively recent times, such as the advent of life and of man, would have occurred innumerable ages back. Here are the facts that dispose of the possibility of eternal matter, and when properly

understood, demand a creative power outside of matter.

I dismiss without consideration, the emanation theory, according to which the universe flows by some natural process, from the Deity. This form of pantheism, though much more reasonable than the atheistic views of today, is generally now rejected.

MATTER IN TIME AND SPACE

Seeing that matter is not eternal, it is easy to conclude that it is not a necessary being. If it exists necessarily it must have existed from eternity.

Theists claim one necessary *being* whom they call God. He exists necessarily. It is impossible that He should not exist. Essence is inseparable from existence in Him. Hence, He is eternal, unchangeable, unmodified, unconditioned by any other being; therefore absolute and infinite.

The world in which we live, the universe of which our earth is a part, is not eternal. It is changeable, limited, conditioned. Also, it is not necessary; in other words it might not be.

Now, since it has come into being at the bidding of some power capable of giving the word, we naturally inquire: Why did it come into being at the particular time? We know no reason why it did not come earlier or why not later. What is the reason that we are not now in the stone age, and what is the reason that we have not attained and even passed the day of the superman? Can science tell us why we are just *now*, and not earlier or later?

Again, why are we in the precise space which we

occupy? The material universe occupies but a very small portion of space. Between our earth and the planets there is a vast area. Why is it not occupied? You may say that it would not be well for us if it were. Then, I ask, who was it that knew in advance that it would not be well for us? Whosoever he was, he must have been close to the Creator at the time this world came into being.

Beyond our solar system there is also vast space. Why is it vacant? Did primordial matter, or the clouds of the nebular hypothesis, know that they must leave so much space unoccupied? Wondrous clouds, surely, if they did! .

But chance, more wondrous than the clouds, came to their aid. Let us hope that this same vagrant, wayward chance, that has, by the merest accident, made such a hit in putting us all where we ought to be, may not in a movement of wild recklessness upset the whole arrangement!

The truth is that atheistic science can give no reason that will explain why the world is so old and not older or younger, or why it occupies the precise space it occupies, with so much vacant. If some scientist, loyal to his cult, wishes to contradict that statement, I should be glad to hear from him. But let him lay aside his *sesquipedalia*, and in the vernacular, present such evidence as a court of justice would accept. I am inclined to think that he cannot do it.

VIII

DEVIOUS WAYS OF "SCIENCE"

ATTITUDE OF SOME SCIENTISTS

THERE is nothing more incomprehensible than the attitude of a certain type of scientists towards the existence of God. Many of the men who teach in our colleges and universities have apparently entered into a conspiracy to boycott the Omnipotent. The few who dissent from the movement seem afraid to manifest their disapproval. Indeed, the atheists have been permitted to name their teaching "science." No one may question their findings without proclaiming himself false to a cult which dominates the schools.

The fact that they flounder hopelessly in their efforts to explain things does not abash them. If the past and present do not aid them they draw lavishly upon the future, which, they confidently assure us, will satisfy all claims. The present expansion of the currency in impoverished Europe is but a trifle compared to the promissory notes issued by the professors of today. All this is done that the Creator may not have a place in His universe.

What would be thought of a public prosecutor who, when called upon to solve some mysterious happening, should say to his men: "There is a wide-spread opinion that A. B. is guilty of this: and indeed, it must be

confessed that such a theory gives a very plausible explanation. But, I demand of you that you account for it on some other hypothesis. A. B. must not be ever thought of in this connection." It is safe to say that, despite much corruption in public life, no man charged with the detection of crime would venture upon such a course.

Yet, such is the stand taken by the so-called scientists of today in investigating the origin of all things. They impose on themselves and others the obligation of finding a cause for the existence of things which will dispense with a creative agency. No matter how often the need of a Creator becomes apparent, no matter how halt any hypothesis that dispenses with Him may be, they go bravely on, confident that the future will supply what is wanting to the present. Atheism now has its prophets, drawn largely from the scientific school!

It will appear later on in this discussion that the most fundamental and far-reaching facts must go without explanation unless a Creator is admitted. Yet, men teaching in schools functioning under Christian auspices, do not hesitate to deny the existence of God, and thus rob their pupils of the only restraining influence. Not only this, but in some instances, the professors of atheism call themselves Christians, and are even associated with some one of the churches—worshippers on Sunday and Godless atheists during the week. They sing "Nearer, My God, to Thee" in church, and banish God from the school! This inconsistency has become so common that it goes unchallenged, perhaps unnoticed.

John Henry Newman somewhere says that scientific studies do not develop the reasoning faculty; and any one who has read modern works on science will agree with that keen observer. Study, ever so little, the present day scientific propaganda, and you will readily discover that Prof. This and Prof. That accept as proof positive what no legally trained mind would for a moment regard as evidence. The average Scientist is credulous to a degree. Whatever makes for his "divinity" is readily accepted. Indeed, I am quite sure that when the present craze has passed, and when men have come to a sane consideration of the great problem, it will be discovered that never in the history of the world was there such an output of twaddle as that given this age by the teachers of so-called science.

The trouble with these men is that they are not broadly educated. They have studied a little science, but scarcely anything else. The master faculty, judgment, they have neglected to develop. In their eagerness to establish the supremacy of evolution they deny adverse views all hearing. Those who differ from them are ignoramuses and dunces who should be relegated to the Dark Ages, or the limbo of dead superstitions.

In order to protect themselves from question, or, it may be, from scorn, they surround themselves with an atmosphere of mystery. Their language is grandiloquent and remote. They borrow their ponderous verbiage from the Greek, a tongue that few of them understand. With an exalted air of classicality and a torrent of sesquipedalian verbosity, they aim to

smother all opposing opinion. That which ought to be presented in understandable language is wrapped in esoteric phrases, which you must understand, under pain of being dismissed as outside the domain of intellect.

If they condescend to debate, Prof. A. will quote Prof. B. and Prof. C., Prof. B. quotes Profs. A. and C. Prof. C. returns the compliment to both. So a formidable array of talent is got out of a vicious circle. How many of them quote Lord Kelvin, who is admittedly one of the few great scientists of all time? If these men are so sure of themselves, they ought to be a little more patient, and they should also state their views in the language of the day, so that he who runs may read. There is no thought that may not be adequately expressed in the vernacular.

Another advice I would give, though they will not take it, is:—learn to weigh evidence and do not jump to conclusions. There may be other and better explanations of the phenomena you observe.

The present writer is convinced that, though science will live and grow, the scientific attitude of today must and will change. Indeed, he believes that the ebb-tide is here. We have, of course, great scientists, but their voices are drowned in the chatter of pretentious sciolism.

THE POTENCY CLAIMED FOR EVOLUTION

According to the view of scientists I have in mind, evolution is the most marvelous power ever heard of. It has taken the shapeless thing that first matter was

and differentiated it by prolonged and unerring process into present forms. Though possessed of no intelligence itself, it has adopted the best means of attaining a definite end! Its course has been along lines which a deity could not improve upon. Having no mind of its own, it has discharged the functions of the highest mentality and ultimately has given us the minds that now are, as well as those that have been.

No pagan deity—not all the pagan deities—has ever accomplished so much. In fact, evolution vies in efficiency with the great Jehovah of Jew and Christian. It is without either peer or rival. And it does all this gratuitously!

The gods of paganism demanded some return for their beneficence. The God of Jew and Christian demands our love and service. But the modern deity, evolution, seeks no compensation, exacts no obedience, is neither pleased nor offended. He leaves us so utterly free that the uttermost libertine can acknowledge Him, without feeling the necessity of restraint. In fact, he is such a "good fellow," and so willing, that we should have a "good time," that many attribute his popularity to this fact alone. He is no "Kill-Joy" and, therefore, we love him.

Of course, he would not have us do ourselves either corporal or mental injury. He would not have us so act as to weaken mind or body. But, if we can settle matters with our physician he is satisfied. This is the complacent attitude which evolution takes, and in which it differs very much from God, Whose law binds patient and physician, gentle and simple, lord and peasant, bond and free.

THE METHODS OF MODERN SCIENCE

The late Robert Ingersoll was known to hold that effective propaganda was conducted, not by argument, but by assertion. Assert and repeat your assertion, until your view has sunk into the memory of those whom you would influence.

It would seem that this method is a favourite with many scientists of today. They assume that argument is not only useless but unnecessary. You must accept their view or be consigned to the necropolis of orthodoxy's "die-hards." Never was hierophant so dogmatical as the scientists can be. They may, perhaps, condescend to inform you of what Prof. A. or Prof. B. says, if it be in harmony with their own views. But, as for deliberate reasoning, or any earnest effort to solve the difficulties that may be advanced against their views—this they never dream of.

Some of them may be good enough to confound you by an avalanche of years. If you challenge the possibility of alleged facts, you are asked to consider the countless eons that have elapsed since the process of evolution began. They forget, and do not desire that you should remember, that years of themselves, accomplish nothing. Time is not an agency. If a thousand years do nothing, ten million years will do nothing. If something is done in a short time, more will be done in long time. But a billion nothings is still nothing. Every one knows, though no one can prove it, that if you create a vacuum and hermetically seal the space, time will not bring anything into it. The appeal to innumerable ages is simply bewildering, but proves nothing. Of course, when people are

willing and anxious to believe, there is little need of argument to convince them. When the craving for novelty is over-mastering, traditional views have small chance. The young, in such circumstances, welcome the one who assumes the rôle of iconoclast. If one can with any show of plausibility, give people novelty, liberty and the unrestrained right to think as they please on any subject, especially on the question of conduct, he is a veritable "Daniel-come-to-Judgment." Hence, assertion sufficiently repeated, combined with contempt for those who deny, produces its effect.

This may not be the true scientific way. Indeed, real science is calm, humble and patient. Neither insolence, nor arrogance, nor contempt is ever found in the genuinely inquiring mind.

IX

PROOFS OF GOD'S EXISTENCE

THE FIRST CAUSE

IN order to simplify the discussion of this subject, I shall ask the reader to allow me to make the following apparently irrelevant remarks: In any illustrious family (indeed in any family) a parent is first, a child last. When I say a child is last, I do not imply that this particular child ends the family, but that it brings it down to date, any date. Also, when I select an illustrious family I do so because the history of such a family is probably better known. Hence, I would for this reason prefer some European dynasty, whose story is familiar, the Hapsburgs, Hohenzollerns, or the English Royal Family; though any known family answers the purpose equally well.

If a parent be not the first there will be no dynasty—the family beginning and ending, at least in direct line, with one generation. A child must be the last; for if the one who terminates the family or brings it up to date, have not a child he (or she) is a child (I do not mean in years) and not a parent. This is so obvious that it is idle to discuss it.

Generations of parents and children alternate and there are as many generations of one as of the other. If, however, it were possible—which it is not—that the head of the family were a child and not a parent,

since the last must be a child, the generations of children would exceed by one the generations of parents. If this seems to the reader too abstruse a little consideration will make it clear.

But some one will say that the parent who was at the head of the family, or dynasty, was a child in some other family of less note. Be it so.

It is now our duty to take up the family of less note and subject it to the same scrutiny. We find that it, too, begins with a parent and ends with a child. And no matter what number of social grades we investigate, we find that each begins with a parent and ends with a child—at the present or any other date.

Or, if we dismiss all reference to social grades and illustrious families, and dynasties, and simply take up any child, and trace it back, no matter through what generations or through how many centuries we find that at the head of that child's human beginning stands a parent who was not a child. This may seem subtle, but it is absolutely true and undeniable, and due consideration will demonstrate it without other argument.

But, some one will say, the parent in the human family was a child in the monkey family. Again, be it so. Hence, we turn to the simian and we find:

This monkey family of which the human parent was the last child began not with a child, but with a parent. The process of argumentation already applied to humans shows this to demonstration. And if it be held that the monkey descended through a number of inferior species, or from a very lowly beginning, we apply the rule laid down and it will appear

that at the head of each species was a parent, at the foot a child. You can figure the matter out for yourself. I have seen fourteen-year-old children solving more difficult problems.

Now, since parents are causes and children effects, the principle applying to them applies to other causes and effects. So let us apply it.

The present world in which we live is the effect of the world that preceded it. This is good evolutionary doctrine. The preceding one was the effect of what went before it. So, we go back as far as you wish, and we find effect and cause alternating, until we reach the beginning. There must be a beginning for we cannot go back forever.

At the head of this long series of causes and effects stands a cause, a first cause, which cannot be an effect, otherwise it would not be the first cause. A moment's consideration will show that if it were an effect it would require a cause. And this cause would antedate the supposed first cause, which would be an absurdity. So at the head of this universe stands a first cause which, whatever it may be, is uncaused. Professional atheists will deny all this, though they offer no substitute; and indolent minds will refuse to enter upon consideration of the matter. But the argument defies contradiction.

In the process of evolution, especially of living things, man stands out as the last effect. The human has not yet given existence to any thing either higher or later than himself. So far, he is not a cause but an effect. Hence, at the head of the alternating series of cause and effect, of which the human is the last

effect, there is a cause which is not an effect. Make the number of causes and effects what you may, there is still a first cause, which is not an effect. There is then a first cause, and if there were not, nothing could ever exist.

To sum up: since anything exists, there must be a first cause which being first must be uncaused; therefore, self-existing, and eternal. If there be no first cause, the first existing thing was an effect without a cause; and as all things are the effect of this effect, whatever is is effect. Such a theory upsets all calculation.

A VOID REMAINS VOID, UNLESS—

The argument derived from the necessity of a First Cause—which, being first, is itself without a cause, therefore, uncaused—is so important that I deem it well to state it in another manner. Generally I find fault with the method of thinking that requires visualization. Now, however, I desire that the reader should visualize.

Take a strong box, as suggested elsewhere, remove everything from it, seal and sign it. Come to it after any number of years and you do not expect to find anything in it. Should, however, you discover that there is really something there—a glove, a hat, a collar button, anything—you immediately conclude that some one broke into it and left you the treasure-trove. There is no other way of accounting for your discovery. The thing did not bring itself there. It did not grow out of nothing. There is no possible way of explaining the presence of the article unless

on the assumption that some one got into the box and left the thing in it.

Let us assume that the space is not a box but a house; and let us go through the same process. The house is empty, its windows and doors closed: you have made it impossible for any one to enter. Yet, when you return some years after you find a bed, a chair, or a broom in it. How did it come? You know with absolute certainty that some agency brought it there, an agency acting from outside.

Ascend some day to the eternal snows that cover an Alpine range. You will find the silence of the place awe-inspiring. Above, the clouds, beneath, the endless snows. Should you return after some time and find an inn at the end of a funicular railway, you would know that it did not plant itself there. It did not grow out of the clouds, or from the snows, or from the silence. Intelligent activity placed it there.

Let us expand our vision. Instead of gazing on the space between the clouds and the snow, we shall visualize all space. Was it always occupied as it is today? Or was it at any time empty? If empty, then, as in the case of your sealed box or house, nothing could come into it, unless brought in by some power capable of bringing or doing the work. Further, it must come from outside of all space. In other words it must be brought into being or created out of nothing by a power equal to the work of creating it.

The evolutionist will say that the bodies and atmospheres which now are found in space come from pre-existing material. Their unwillingness to admit a

Creator forces them into this position. But if matter be not eternal it must have been brought into being by something that is not itself. There is no other alternative.

The things we observe in the universe manifest life, order, intelligence. Hence, this original matter which is presumed to be eternal must have been alive, or if not alive must have had the power of creating life. All we know of the subject today denies the possibility of life coming from dead matter. What right, then, have we to assume that original matter had a potency which matter, as we know it today, has not?

Furthermore, we find in the universe of today intelligence, sometimes of a very high order. Has the matter with which you are acquainted intelligence? If not how can you hold that original matter had? Or does the intelligence we observe come from a particular kind of matter that has now ceased to be? If so, we are forced to ask what agency gave to one portion of original matter an extraordinary power which it has denied to another? Evolution makes a too great demand on our credulity.

Also, we find in our experience a freedom which the matter of today seems not to possess. We find, for instance, people saying I will and I will not; I engage to be with you tomorrow, or I cancel a former engagement. Had the original matter such power of discretion? or was it capable of creating it? Could it bestow something, and such an extraordinary something, which it itself did not possess?

In addition to this, we find things putting them-

selves in motion—animals, for instance—and bringing themselves to a full stop. Matter as we know it can do neither one nor the other.

Hence, even though we concede that matter is eternal we still find so many insurmountable difficulties in the evolutionist theory that only the blindest credulity can accept it. A dozen impossibilities greet the evolutionist—who nevertheless, goes bravely on.

Thus far I have been conceding the possibility of eternal matter. Elsewhere I endeavour to show, and not without success, that matter is not eternal. It cannot by any possibility be eternal in the strict sense of the word. We find it in motion and subject to change. Had it been in motion and changing from eternity, an infinite number of changes would have taken place. This would of course have exhausted all possible changes. For beyond the infinite there is nothing. Neither the word *eternal* nor the word *infinite* can by any possibility be applied to matter, or to any thing that changes. An infinite series is an absurdity. There is one infinite and eternal being unchanged and unchangeable, God.

MOTION AND A FIRST MOVER

Walking leisurely in an afternoon I approached a railway switch where I saw a long train of freight cars standing idly on the track. Suddenly, I heard a bump, then another and a third, and so on, until the whole train was moving backwards. I noticed that that which gave the first bump was the engine and that which received it was the first car. Having received the shock the first car communicated it to the

second, the second to the third, etc., until all were in motion.

Not one of the cars moved itself. If something outside it had not interfered, each car would have remained in ease and comfort, until time and the elements should dissolve it. The engine was the cause of all the trouble.

Did the engine move itself? No. There was something within it which we call steam—this performed the trick. Back of the steam was water. What did the water do? It certainly would have done nothing, but would have remained absolutely quiescent, had not a force which we call heat begun to operate on it. This unruly heat caused the water to expand and in expanding it had to have more room, which it found by moving something out of its way. The thing moved, being stubborn, when deprived of the room it occupied, insisted upon occupying room belonging to another,—and so motion began.

The heat which is the cause of all the trouble does not produce itself. It is caused by a process of disintegration—which we common folks call burning—of coal or wood. So now we find the guilt lies with coal and wood, themselves innocent victims of commercialism and of the application of heat at a high degree. Neither coal nor wood is bent on giving trouble; hence, they would gladly remain as they had been, were they not subjected to torture.

But it must be admitted that both coal and wood are potential mischief-makers. However, we must in justice admit that there would be no danger from either coal or wood, for there would be neither coal

nor wood, but for a powerful and aggressive entity that we call Sun. Nor would this Sun do much damage, had he not been able to influence his servant, Earth. So acting upon this tame subject, he has been able to produce, through a process we call vegetation, both coal and wood.

Yet, again in justice to this criminal alliance between Sun and Earth, we must admit that they do not, because they cannot, give any trouble, unless they can use for their fell design, another thing we call life, vegetable life. Without this they could grow no trees, plant no forest, have neither wood nor coal. Their wickedness would come to naught, the engine would bump no car, were it not for this evil genius we call vegetable life.

We now ask, whence is this vixen, vegetable life, the cause of all the bumps? We know not; our laboratories cannot produce it. Does it produce itself? If it did, it would be ultimate in the process of causing and of being. But we do not think it produces itself. It is too weak, too dependent, too much in need of aids—soil, water, sun—to be the absolute and eternal. We must go back of vegetable life to find some independent thing. And, as an infinite series of causes is absurd and impossible, we must finally reach a cause that is first and, therefore, uncaused; a motive power that is itself unmoved. For, if not unmoved, it must have something else to move it, and therefore would not be first mover.

Applying these thoughts to the world about us, we find matter everywhere in motion. Our solar system in reference to the universe, our earth in relation to

the solar system; also rotating upon its axis. The waters of our planet are often in angry tumult; movement of seasons, of animal and vegetable, of things coming, of things going; motion within the plant and the blade of grass, motion in the clod of earth, motion in the atmosphere, which can be gentle and also blow destruction. Whence is it all?

We know that matter cannot change itself. It cannot put itself in motion. It cannot, when in motion, bring itself to rest. Whence, then, its motive power? What so disturbs it? If you begin to assign a cause we inquire for the cause of the cause, and so on. You must either admit a first motive power itself unmoved, or take refuge in an infinite series of motors, an impossible and absurd refuge, as we have seen.

So motion, everywhere observable, demands a first motor which is itself unmoved. (The same would be true, if, instead of a universe in motion, we had one clod of earth in motion.) And the first motor unmoved must be capable of imparting to the universe the varied and enormous motion we find in it. Otherwise, you have an effect without a cause, therefore an impossibility.

My argument demands only an adequate cause for all the motion there is. But, further investigation will show that this adequate cause is no other than the eternal, unconditioned, necessary and infinite Being, whom in English we call God.

If science can give us motion without a mover, a first mover, which being first is itself unmoved, we are all attention. If it point to chemical action, we

ask, whence is chemical action? What gave matter the power to thus put itself in action? If it belong of necessity to matter, then nothing material can ever be quiescent. Further, if matter be independent and eternal, it must have been in motion through eternity, and therefore, ought to have completed its work long ago. There is, then, no refuge but in a first motive power which is itself unmoved, God.

GOD AND ORGANISMS

By organisms I mean beings that have the power of assimilating some of the things about them and thus growing from within. In other words, the things that possess life, whether vegetable or animal.

While my purpose is to show that the existence of life, vegetable or animal, demonstrates the existence of such a being as God the argument here advanced is in no wise necessary to my main contention. Without it we have proofs in abundance of the great truth of God's existence. Besides, spontaneous generation was generally accepted until recent years; hence, even by those who never questioned the existence of God. Consequently, should the time come when it may appear that life is independent of special creation, the necessity of a Creator will still be easily demonstrable.

I am writing on a beautiful May day when all about me is aglow with exuberant life. The trees are garbing themselves in raiment of nature's spinning; many flowers are in bloom; and happy herds browse on generous meadows. Everywhere is life. The charm of it all is irresistible. But we must not forget that there was a time, a long while back, when these things did

not exist. There was a time when this earth of ours knew no life; there were periods when, according to science, our world could neither nourish nor tolerate life; periods in which the matter we now find sustaining life was so nebulous, so hot or so cold, that life here was an impossibility. Neither scientist nor theologian will question this statement.

From such condition, bleak, barren and forbidding, we have happily come to a time when teeming life gladdens the eye of the beholder, and when fruitful mother earth promises plenty for her millions of humans and countless numbers of flocks and herds. Whence, the change? All came through the advent, when conditions permitted, of life to our sphere. Whence this life?

Some have fancied that it may have blown in from another planet. A fancy, indeed, absurd and impossible: and if possible it would only push the inquiry farther back.

Scientists who rule out a Creator insist, and, to be consistent, must insist that whatever of life we behold on this earth has come from spontaneous generation: life simply came from lifeless matter, by virtue of some potency within the matter. An alarming theory, surely. Alarming because what matter once did, it may do again. Hence, the ground we till may some day rise up to punish our intrusion, and the road we walk on may open to engulf us in a chasm, in retribution for our prolonged trespass. If this seem to be trifling, permit me to reply that the scientists are constantly, though unconsciously, engaged in such nonsense.

In reference to spontaneous creation, it may be con-

fidently asserted that there is no proof that any such coming into life has ever taken place. Scientists and theists agree in this; with this difference that theists generally incline to the view that it cannot take place, while atheists, by the very necessities of their position, hold that it can and has taken place, though they do not pretend to prove it. The question for them, as you may see, is one of extreme urgency. For, if spontaneous generation is not a fact, then they must admit a Creator, an admission which they would regard as intellectual suicide.

Not only is there no proof that spontaneous generation ever occurred, but all laboratory efforts to produce life, even in its lowest form, from non-living matter, have failed. Scientists have devoted much time and great skill, aided by the best facilities, to bring forth life. They have been stimulated, not only because the foundation of their theories is at stake, but because enduring fame awaits the man who can call forth any form of life from non-living matter. But no candidate for the unfading laurel has yet appeared. Many sane and enlightened men confidently assert that he will never appear.

Not only, so far as present knowledge goes, is some power from outside necessary to produce life in this material world, but such extramundane influence is necessary to bridge over the chasm that separates vegetable from animal life. Hitherto there is not a particle of evidence that any vegetable organism has been able to pick itself out of the earth and begin to strut about as an animal, even in the latter's lowest form. Nor do we think any definite claim is made

that such has happened. Of course, we are often awed by the vast number of years that is shaken at us. But, we may not forget that years of themselves accomplish nothing. So, it does not appear that up to date there is a shred of justification for holding that life upon earth has come or could come from any source other than a creative act. Evolution of inorganic matter, even when aided by science, has not, so far, produced a living thing; and there is not the smallest reason for holding that the genus vegetable has ever been transformed into the genus animal.

However, cogent as this argument is, we do not attach to it the importance which we must give to that derived from the necessity of a First Cause. For, we cannot assert, though present appearances would seem to justify the assertion, that the future will not devise methods of producing life from inorganic matter. Should this happen, while it would not prove that evolution produced the life that now is, it would diminish the force of the present argument. This proof of God's existence is not then as compelling as some of the other proofs. But fortunately, it is not necessary. For, not only was it not always advanced by theists in the past, but even though it could be shown that life may come from inanimate matter, still there would be need of a First Cause to explain the potency given to nature.

Let me add that, while the existence of life upon earth does not of itself prove to demonstration the necessity of a Creator, it makes such necessity exceedingly probable; indeed, so probable, that had the protagonists of atheistic science, such a proof for

their views they would certainly utter a triumphal note.

EARTH TESTIFIES TO DESIGN

When we come to consider the earth in itself, that is, apart from the other members of the solar system, we find no escape from the conviction that a designing hand fashioned it. How else could the things, which only the wilfully blind can fail to observe, be accounted for?

I repeat what I have already remarked, that in order to infer a designer it is not necessary to discover design in everything. If there be design in anything, then there is a designer.

I am far from conceding that an intelligent plan does not pervade the whole. But we may not be able to see it everywhere—either because of our prejudices, or incapacity; or because the plan has been to some extent interfered with, by the only one who is free to interfere with it, man; or because the great Creator does not choose to reveal it, demanding confidence from us, even when things seem to be without explanation. “Blessed is he that has not seen and has believed.”

Whether or not we can discover design everywhere there cannot possibly be question but there is design somewhere, and this is enough. It is impossible not to see intelligent plan in “the day to labor and the night to rest,” in the succession of seasons, in the majesty of winter, in the splendid hope of spring, the richness of summer and the bountiful rewards that autumn brings. There is no monotony in nature, but

an ever-varying flow, constantly tending to the one end, which is human welfare.

Those who accept the theory of an undifferentiated mass of primordial matter, and this in time resolving itself into present conditions, by any means other than intelligent guidance, will find it hard to account for the fact, that the different minerals have been able to separate themselves into the various mines. How did the gold get together, and the iron, etc? You may try to explain how it happened, but you cannot find the cause, the agency, unless you admit an intelligent designer.

Man needs iron for his advancement, and the amount that may be found diffused generally through earth and water will not answer his purpose. Was it not a designing intelligence that put it together in sufficient quantities to make it the instrument of human civilization? The same question may be asked about other minerals.

How does it happen that water, which, like other things, generally expands under the influence of heat, comes to a condition in which cold becomes the agency of expansion? As it gets close to the freezing point it grows in volume and becomes lighter. Did it not, did ice follow the general law, instead of floating on the surface, it would sink into the water, and escape the sun's rays in the summer. Our lakes would then become masses of ice, fish life would be impossible, and man's use of the waters gravely menaced.

Have you ever considered the wonderful irrigating works that the Creator has placed above us? The

earth needs water in spring and in summer. The great Designer has established a system by which water is lifted from ocean, lake and river, and spread over the thirsty land, with an efficiency compared to which human effort is but a toy. When the water has served its purpose, it goes back to its source to be again and again called up to serve similar beneficent use. Any one who fails to see intelligent purpose in nature's system of irrigation is blind indeed.

When the autumn comes and the grass, vines and such things cease to bloom, when the leaves fall in profusion from the trees, were there not some way of disposing of these incumbrances, earth would in time become so covered with dead grass and leaves that there would be no possibility of further growth. But nature gives us a kingdom of microscopic living things to dispose of the obstruction. Through the operation of these unseen friends, fallen vegetation is reduced to dust, and becomes a help, not a hindrance, to further growth. Is there no design in this? One might write volumes on such evidences of design. But we turn now to the instinct of animals.

See the migratory birds: they know when to leave our northern climate and when to return, though they keep no calendar. Who teaches them?

Have you ever seen a bird's nest? Naturalists tell us that the plan could hardly be improved upon; yet a bird not a year old often builds it. Nor did she have an opportunity of seeing her mother build one. Still her first attempt is a success and in many instances a marvelous success; and when her young ones appear she manages her new charge with utmost

efficiency. Though she has never attended a meeting of a mothers' club, she knows how to provide for their comfort and their health. Yet, when they are able to care for themselves, she is quite peremptory in dismissing them. Who taught this bird when to build the nest, how to build it, how long to brood, how to take such unerring care of her offspring, and when to dismiss them? Is there no design in all this? Has the little thing thought it all out herself?

She has not thought of it at all, but has done all of these things, not by virtue of what is intelligence in a human, not because of advice or experience, but simply in obedience to a prompting within herself. Who placed the prompting there? Who gave the design which works out so marvelously in bird and beast and bee? No other than He Who is Author of all life and all being.

If we were to turn from bird to bee, the design becomes even more apparent, as the wisdom shown is even more astonishing.

Those who have studied bee-life are amazed at the intelligent purpose manifest. The structure of their homes and the government of their colony are alike amazing. So with ants, beetles and others. Everywhere there is intelligent purpose, everywhere design; purpose and design that cannot come from the little creatures themselves, but are derived from the great Creator Who gives the impulse for the preservation of the species.

This impulse not only serves to provide these creatures with homes and government, but with food of the proper kind, and even with defence. What-

ever is necessary for the conservation of the species comes under the control of that impulse, which we call instinct.

When we come to consider the construction of living things we find food for endless wonder. Fish could not be better adapted for the water, nor birds for the air. In both instances form and organs are fitted for their purposes. So it is in the matter of gravity. Were fish heavier they would sink to the bottom, and stay there; were they lighter they could not penetrate it. So it is with animals and men: were they other than they are, earth could not be their dwelling-place. Here, however, fish, bird, beast and humans find health, nourishment and much happiness.

Some evolutionist may say that this happens through the "survival of the fittest." But it is obvious that none would survive were they not from the beginning essentially as they are today. They would all have died were they not adapted from the start to their environment.

When one comes to examine organs such as the eye or the ear, in man or in beast, purpose and plan become so evident that we find it hard to understand how any one could attribute such marvels of design to chance. An honest study of the human eye should prove a cure for atheism. I would recommend any of my readers, who may be disposed to see nothing but the operation of blind chance in the universe, to open some popular work on the organs of sense, sight, hearing, etc. If such a study do not prove a challenge to atheism and materialism, the evil is indeed securely entrenched.

We see, therefore, in the heavens above us, in the earth beneath, in its waters, mines, vegetation—indeed, everywhere and in everything—the most far-seeing design. We see it in field and flower and forest, in times and seasons. It is in the structure and instincts of animals. Tell me that all this came from the chance or the blind march of matter, and you make an impossible demand on my credulity. If all this does not imply a designer, it is idle to hope to attain to any knowledge. The most wonderful things may happen without a cause, and man's effort to infer anything, to know anything, has not even a gambler's chance. If the heavens do not show forth the glory of God, all human knowledge is not even good guessing.

When, some years ago, the views associated with the name of Darwin became well known, many theists began to fear that, while other proofs of God's existence remained unshaken, the argument from design had lost considerable of its force. They have, however, recovered their nerve, and now wonder why they should have been perturbed. In fact, it is at present generally recognized that evolution, in so far as we know it, but gives us a more sublime conception of the Great Designer.

Assuming that the world about us has evolved from a mass of diffused matter, and has taken the shapes we now see, we naturally ask: what must be the power and wisdom that gave such resource and such guidance? How great and intelligent must be the One Who endowed first matter with the power of differentiating itself so unerringly into the forms we see?

To start the universe on its course, onward and upward, and to bestow upon its initial state the wisdom that has never for a moment abandoned it, is certainly an achievement worthy of a God. Who but God could give, at the beginning, to the universe a direction which, without change or amendment, remains with it yet, and will doubtless remain with it until the end? Evolution, then, properly understood, but gives us a more awe-inspiring view of Design and Designer.

GOD, THE DESIGNER

By design I understand the determining of an end, which is to be attained by the use of definite means. I do not call this definition exhaustive, but I think it sufficient for our purpose. I might even leave the word undefined, because its meaning is clear.

Design requires intelligence, knowledge of the end to be attained; knowledge of the means by which it may be attained. If I were asked to account for the wonderful structures of which birds and bees are the authors, I simply answer, there is intelligence somewhere. Let this suffice for the present: I shall deal with the matter later.

In this discussion I do not address myself to the professional objector, nor to the sophist, pettifogger or charlatan. The one whose business is to hide or deny the truth does not interest me. The appeal is to the honest common-sense of the average man, who has no axe to grind and no grudge against the Almighty.

The average man, "a boon in his might," knows

that when he comes across something that is not explained by its surroundings, there is occasion for investigating. Should the farmer, in tilling the soil, turn up an instrument such as he has not seen before, he examines it closely in order to discover its significance. If, as Paley says, the thing discovered be a watch and the farmer has never before seen such a piece of mechanism, his curiosity would be especially aroused. What brought the thing there? What its purpose? How constructed? The archæologist who digs into ruins scrutinizes each discovery carefully. If something new or unusual turn up, he immediately tries to discover its purpose, and what age and what people were likely to produce and use such an instrument. In this way, wonderful light has been thrown upon prehistoric times and peoples.

The ruins of Athens and of Rome are being investigated, the temples and pyramids of Egypt are being searched, in order that further light may be thrown upon the ancient peoples of these lands. When a lamp, a statue, or a temple is discovered, no one doubts but it is the work of human hands, and that it has been fashioned for a purpose. Syria and Assyria declare their ancient civilization to those who remove sand and debris from buried buildings. Everywhere there is design, and design to the honest mind speaks of a designer. Altars proclaim belief in a god, theatres speak of histrionic art, sculpture of gods or heroes; the mummies of some comprehension of immortality; and all proclaim the human intelligence and faith that inspired the fashioning of these things. The average man knows that a house declares

human inhabitants, that a wall means separation or protection, that a citadel speaks of defence, that coin declares a degree of civilization. No honest man holds that a statue made itself, that a beautiful painting came from the accidental spreading of oil, that a page of excellent literature arose from the fortuitous scattering of letters. Only the scientists can see that after a long period of the blowing about of letters, Homeric poems or Shakesperian dramas accidentally came into existence. No, the average intelligence looks for design in these things. It is to the average intelligence—not to sophisticated minds—I address myself in these pages.

There can be no question but, whatever the professional skeptic may say, the common sense of mankind sees purpose and design in the world about us. In fact, without the aid of sophistry, it is impossible to escape the conviction. From design we infer a designer.

It may be well here to state that in order to prove the existence of a designer, it is not necessary that everything should show evidence of intelligent purpose. The studio of a noted artist may manifest much carelessness. The visitor who sees untidiness in many places may conclude that the workshop is very much on the haphazard order. But, when he comes face to face with the painting or statue, he is forced to confess to an intelligent purpose, and one even of a very high order. There is assuredly design, though it may not be seen everywhere.

Again, it may happen that the artist has in his collection some works of inferior merit. How reconcile the masterpiece with that daub in oil, or monstrosity

in marble. Easily enough. The artist did not intend the base production to be other than base, or perhaps he has not yet finished his work. There is another possibility: the critic may not be quite so intelligent as he thinks, or he does not understand the many purposes the artist may have in view.

Similarly, in order to prove design in the universe, it is not necessary to show that everything manifests intelligent purpose; it is sufficient that some things, even that one thing, give unmistakable evidence that certain means were clearly used for a definite end. If we show that any part of the universe gives evidence that it is directed to a particular end, we show that intelligence has given the direction and has foreseen the result. Should any one point to things that manifest no purpose, that appear defective, or the opposite of beneficent, we are able to answer that such a one may not be qualified to judge, that he does not and cannot see all the purposes the Creator may have in view, or, perhaps, that the work is incomplete; or, finally, that the great Designer did not plan the particular thing to be perfect. Believers hold that God did not intend this world to be ideal, and that man's free action has gravely interfered with such perfection as it was intended to possess. Further, they assert, what must be obvious to any one, that the Creator's dealings with the world are not always disclosed; nor have His relations with it come to an end. They would, therefore, say to the critic of the divine plan: suspend judgment, wait and see if, to twist a common expression, the end will not justify the means.

The atheistical evolutionist who sees an argument against the idea of a beneficent Creator in the wretched things we sometimes encounter in life should be wary in expressing his views. For he must remember that his evolution is a blind force, which has no discretion, but must act in inexorable uniformity. It can no more do a thing well today and badly tomorrow, than the printing press can determine to take a day off, or occasionally render inferior work. So, whatever chance there is of having variety from an intelligent cause, there is nothing but a dead level from the evolutionary machine.

I have already said that in order to prove a designer it is not necessary to show that all things are designed; it is but necessary to establish that there is design somewhere. I say this for the sake of argument only; for, as a matter of fact, I believe that intelligent and beneficent design pervades the universe. But we must come to particulars.

This earth of ours, we are told, is subjected to two forces, one of which would send it like an arrow into space, the other would, if it could, plunge it into the fiery furnace that we call the sun. Either of these happenings would spell disaster. We are safe because neither of the forces will yield one iota. If either of them did, if either became relatively less or more than it is, the earth and its denizens would hurry to destruction. Not only this, but the whole solar system would be so disturbed that no one can imagine what might follow. We may even go further, and even suggest that, as there is possibly considerable sympathy between the entire universe and each part

thereof, no created mind can conceive of what might happen if either force—tug or impulse—yielded a little. We are safe, the universe is safe, because of the uncompromising attitude of these two forces.

Is this balance preserved by accident? Does it show no purpose? Is there neither intelligence nor beneficence behind it? Let any intelligent and fair-minded man or woman look at this one fact and then say that all this magnificent plan, which has been guiding the universe since the universe began, comes from a blind agency, or from chance. It were idle to reason with one who could make such an assertion.

Instead of confining our thoughts to this insignificant globe upon which we live, let our imagination expand to include the universe. There are millions of heavenly bodies,—some aglow with light, as our sun, some shining with borrowed light as our moon. These millions roam in space and mutually affect, and are affected by, one another. If any one of them should break loose from its moorings, what, think you, would happen? Compared to these in their number and magnitude, our earth is but a grain of sand on the sea-shore. And all these myriads of heavenly bodies observe law and order, as they have been observing it from their beginning; each traveling in its own orbit, sun, planets, satellites, comets, and meteors; each, by a necessity of its nature, refusing to interfere with the course of all others. Has blind force or chance done all this? The man who believes in blind force or chance should, if he were consistent, be ever in dread of an all-embracing catastrophe. A menagerie let loose, a train of cars running wild, an

earthquake or cyclone, would be a negligible trifle compared to the ever-abiding possibilities of a universe governed otherwise than by an all-wise, all-powerful and beneficent being, such as we hold God to be.

EARTH'S BEAUTY WITNESSES TO GOD

It is not easy to imagine what one who has been locked up in a dungeon from infancy experiences when, on some blessed day, he is permitted to gaze upon this goodly earth of ours. We who enjoy liberty and daily communing with nature scarcely realize the beauty of our earthly habitation.

As I write, on this charming spring day, I may gaze out the window and see a picture such as no artist can reproduce. The trees wear a garment of richest verdure; blossoms take on the most delicate tints, and birds revel in exuberant delight. It is hard to be sullen or churlish, pessimistic or atheistic today.

The season will advance and richer colours will come. Pulsating summer will follow the charm of spring; and then autumn, with its rich glow, fulfilling the promise that May now gives. Winter, serious and majestic, follows. It speaks of death, but of a death that shall itself die, and be lost in resurrection. Each season has its own charm, its own interest, its own hope. If we had but the innocence which was once ours, all our days would be full of joy.

I would request the reader to gaze on the meadows in the spring, on the grain fields in the autumn, and ask himself if blind chance or stupid matter has evolved all this! Look at the mountain in its grand-

eur, and at the ocean either in fury or in calm, and tell me if such glorious visions do not speak of the Lord of glory!

I do not claim that the beauty of nature of itself proves the existence of God. That great verity is otherwise amply demonstrated. But, remember that the great First Cause has given us, among a multitude of other things, the beauty of the wild flower, the tint of the rose, the aroma of the garden, the majesty of the mountain, the calm repose of the placid lake, the song of the bird, the grandeur of the ocean. All this for man. If you will but admit the impression that the charm of nature must make upon every healthy mind functioning in a healthy body, can you have the hardihood, the ingratitude, to say that all this comes from slime or protoplasm operating upon itself? Nature witnesses to its God; only wicked man denies Him.

CONSCIENCE WITNESSES TO GOD

There is in every human being a troublesome, restless, mysterious something which we call conscience. It may differ in minor matters, but substantially it is the same in all people.

The minor differences come from education, training, habit. The substantial thing comes from a source that is independent of us. Were not the source independent, we could stifle the troublesome voice; but our experience is that we cannot.

We find this mysterious censor ever on the alert, and ever proclaiming its right to interfere. We resolve to do something that suits our present mood,

and cannot do any damage in the future. But this meddlesome pest says, "You must not do it, for it is wrong." We ask, "Why?" and the answer comes back, "You must not do it, for it is wrong."

But we assert that it does not hurt any human being and that it is delightfully pleasing or profitable. The little tyrant yields not. He is inexorable. We may be able to bend friend or family to our purpose, but the silent dictator will not yield.

Even though we have refused to listen to him in the past, even though we have more than once flouted his most solemn warning, he considers not his offended dignity, but stands upon his authority; he overlooks the contempt with which we have treated him and boldly speaks again in the most decisive manner.

If we obey his command, if we refuse to do what he has forbidden, he comes to us with sweetest comfort; he brings us a peace and a happiness such as the world cannot give. If, however, we defy him and in spite of his warning do the wrong thing, he returns when it is over to scourge us with remorse. The spirit is merciless. He accepts no excuse, but flays and flays. If, in order to get away from the torment, we hurry to company or to dissipation, he watches our return, and when we are again alone he applies his scourge. All this, even though it may be shown that what we have done has brought no physical pain or injury to anyone.

Whence is our tormentor? What authority does he represent? Is he a torturing fiend whose mission is to make men miserable?

He cannot be that, because he does not make the

obedient miserable. His activities, his scourgings, are decidedly in the interest of righteousness. He is, then, not a fiend. Some one has called him "The hound of heaven." This he may be. But if there be no heaven, he cannot be its hound.

This thing we call conscience, this restless dictator and tormentor who so categorically says, you *must* in one case, and you *must not* in another, this imperious master who commands and forbids, rewards and punishes, would have no meaning and could have no existence, if there were not a supreme Law Giver Whose voice he re-echoes. Like Pilate, he would have no authority unless it were given him from above.

If, then, there be no God, conscience is a cruel bluffer, an evil genius, a villainous tyrant, that should be restricted and crushed. Yet, who would destroy that imperious voice? And who would care to do business with one who had destroyed it? What the world needs is not less conscience, but more; and what the world also needs is not less but *more* thought of God. God, speaking through conscience, is the remedy for our ills, and there is no other.

Canvass all the expedients and all the isms and you will find your pursuit growing more and more hopeless, until you turn to God Who speaks through conscience.

THE GENERAL ACCEPTANCE OF THE BELIEF

It is idle to deny the universality of belief in a deity of some kind. It was with man in his most primitive state. It did not come from the tyranny of

priest or king, for it antedates both priest and king. It exists today among all peoples, with only individuals here and there dissenting.

Generally, too, the dissenting ones pay tribute to the belief by the uneasiness they manifest when the question is raised. They are of the kind that protest too much. Few of them regard the matter with such complete indifference, as, for instance, the average American will show when someone tells him that we are drifting towards monarchy. They seem rather to feel as one who is carrying off property that is not his own, and is constantly on the alert. It would, therefore, appear either that they are not entirely convinced, or that they are doing violence to their minds and consciences in holding their views.

How different it is with the theist! He manifests no uneasiness. He does not have to argue with himself or others. He is in calm possession of what is his, and he clings more tenaciously to his conviction as the hour in which his belief will be put to the supreme test approaches. No one ever heard of a believer losing confidence in his faith when death threatens. If he should at that hour have misgivings at all, they will refer to his own conduct; and this implies the vivid conviction that he must soon meet his Judge.

Belief in the existence of a Deity has often taken unworthy, indeed, sometimes degrading forms. To what extent this degradation affected men's views of the supreme divinity in which most people believed, would constitute a long inquiry. Suffice it to say that, generally speaking, the deities that could be bribed to

render unworthy service were of the inferior kind. The Great Spirit was beyond catering to human desire.

Whence sprang this general, if not universal, belief in a God? Did it come from some primitive revelation or from a common impulse? The assertion that it was the invention of tyrants, who thus wished to dragoon men into obedience, is met by the well-established fact that belief in a god came prior to all tyrants and all tyranny.

It was not born of convention; it existed before men learned to convene. It came, then, from a universal impulse which must be part of human nature; or it came from some primitive revelation which affected the common ancestry of all. The probabilities are that it came from such revelation and found a ready acceptance in the minds of all, as all possessed a natural disposition to receive it.

When it is said that reason unaided can come to the knowledge of God's existence, the assertion is not intended to mean that each individual can reach the conviction. Nor is it asserted that the concept of God must not first come from without. The idea is, that men of intellect, after hearing of God, can, from consideration of the world about them, come to a certain knowledge of His existence.

It may be that the argument from a universal conviction does not establish the existence of God. But it will be admitted that universal agreement on any matter is phenomenal, being altogether exceptional. In nothing else is there such unanimity found. It would, hence, be strange indeed if all were deceived

on the question. On the other hand, it must be admitted that it is rash on the part of any one to contradict so universal a view. The world's greatest and best held the belief. No one will deny that he who has so profoundly changed the face of the earth, Christ of Nazareth, was most outspoken in His conviction of an all-ruling Deity. We may confidently ask what work of permanent value has been accomplished by atheism? If you, dear reader, know of any, do tell us; tell us calmly and reasonably; we do not want the bluster in which atheism usually responds. But, we are willing to consider facts no matter by whom presented.

The universality of belief in a god or gods among the ancients is testified to by such authorities as Cicero, Plutarch and Plato. Their words on the matter have been so often quoted that I do not deem it necessary to reproduce them here. Modern ethnologists, with scarcely an exception, find that up to the present there is no people that have been found without religion in some form. Individuals may be atheistic; nations are not.

X

DIFFICULTIES

SOME BORN OF OUR OWN WEAKNESSES

PROOFS of God's existence are superabundant. Indeed, the proof derived from the necessity of the First Cause is itself sufficient. No one capable of understanding this argument can fail to see that there must be a self-existing, necessary Being, capable of bringing into existence all that is.

But, in order to understand the force of this proof, one must come to the consideration of it with an honest purpose of seeking the truth. Nothing short of this will do; yet alone it will not suffice.

The reasoning is abstract, and, hence, requires some mental training. The average person is scarcely capable of grasping the full force of the argument, though it is compelling to those who are able to give it proper consideration. Hence, the majority of people accept God's existence on the word of others. Indeed, it may be said that all believers, in the first instance, accept God on the testimony of parents or teachers. This does not, of course, prevent them, in after life, from examining the testimony which is offered in favour of the belief. The fact that one's faith is from childhood does not forbid his ascertaining that in a series of causes there must be a first, and that this first must be equal to all the effects produced.

But to attain to the knowledge of God through a process of reasoning we must first have a willingness to accept Him, and also, to accept all that belief in His existence implies. Beyond this, we require the talent and the time necessary to reach the full force of the arguments. These two conditions are required, not only when belief is to be attained, but also, when in after life, it may be threatened. It is clear, then, that the acceptance of the Deity is not so easy as the acceptance of the fact that two and two are four. For, first of all, if one be not willing to agree to the arithmetical question, his neighbours will soon insist that he change his attitude. If he wishes to live in human society he must, in practice, accept society's methods of counting. Besides, the little problem in arithmetic is an obvious one; indeed, so obvious that one would have to be very insane to question it. We are not free to deny it. If the existence of God were as obvious, no one would dare to challenge it. Indeed, the acceptance of the Deity would be neither a free nor a meritorious act. But, as we have seen, the great question requires a proper attitude of mind, the necessary talent and due consideration.

As bearing on the question of good will, it is generally conceded that your personality enters largely into your beliefs. It is not, then, a matter of pure reason. The whole man believes or refuses to believe. Suspicious people hesitate or are fickle. Misanthropes seldom see any good anywhere. Lawless minds instinctively question any principle that directly or indirectly imposes restraint. It is the man, not merely the mind, that is convinced. One person ac-

cepts, another rejects ; not because the arguments presented are different, but because the men are.

The chronic doubter, who must touch, measure, and count before accepting anything is a tantalizing fellow. Few care for his company, and fewer are willing to meet his unreasonable demands. His attitude would dissipate knowledge, ruin confidence, and make civilized existence impossible. Mankind lives and moves on moral certainty. We do not and cannot demand mathematical exactitude in the affairs of life.

Let no one conclude from these remarks that I am apologizing for not being able to give clear demonstration of the existence of God. Far from making such an apology, I am utterly convinced that His existence is so completely demonstrable that those who refuse to accept it are inexcusable. What I wish to affirm is that the arguments which prove His existence do not compel those who are unwilling to be convinced. In other words, the acceptance of God, though His existence be proved to demonstration, is a free act, based on consideration and moral qualities ; hence different from the acceptance of the truth that two and two are four.

No matter how demonstrable a truth may be, if, with any appearance of justice, objections may be raised against it, men will be found to raise them. For instance, there is scarcely anything more certain than that the human will is free, generally speaking. Yet for centuries this great truth has been intermittently questioned. Indeed, able debaters have been found to deny it. Nor does the denial usually come from the uneducated.

The doctrine of free will and the existence of God have this in common, that each imposes restraint. A personal God demands obedience, free will demands responsibility. No God, no restraint; no free will, no power of restraint. The denial of either makes for libertinism. While saying this, I do not wish to imply that atheists are all libertines.

It is also obvious that the skilled dialectician can give a complexion of his own to any question. The clever lawyer can argue on either side of the case. In fact, if he be not opposed by one of equal talent, the best cause may be made to suffer at his hands. The courts are all familiar with such happenings.

Similarly, the adroit atheist or agnostic, versed in the language of his school, may easily bewilder by assertion, sophistry, and Greek derivatives, one less proficient in argumentation. It has been done in the past, and it is being done now. It is, however, a comfort to know, that while men of good will may not be able to answer the objector they are quite equal to the task of estimating him. If there are and have been men who deny the existence of God, there are and have been those who deny free will, the rights of conscience, parental authority, the authority of government; indeed, men who are willing to deny the reality of anything, human or divine.

HOW HARMONIZE EXISTING EVIL WITH GOD'S EXISTENCE

Doleful stories are often told of the condition of earth, with its moral evil and the sufferings which afflict all sentient things. Unseemly conduct is every-

where about ; while man and animal are constantly the victims of untold misery. How can such a condition be reconciled with the existence of an all-powerful and beneficent Being?

Let me at once admit the difficulty of the situation. We are not always able to explain, even to ourselves, why matters should be as they are. Things that happen often puzzle us, and not infrequently we are forced to abandon the solution of the difficulty. But should this weaken our confidence in the existence of a good God? Assuredly not.

How often are we put to our wits' ends to explain the conduct of a trusted friend? Yet, we would be unworthy, nay, incapable, of genuine friendship, if we allowed such a condition to shake our confidence. Can one claim to understand the entire situation? Are we sure that we have fathomed the deep, honest motives that a genuine friend may have for his conduct? We must at least give him the benefit of the doubt, and await the time when an explanation will be forthcoming. This is especially true when we are not in his class ; when, for instance, his wisdom transcends ours ; or when he is engaged in a business or profession with which we are not familiar. How often have men who exercise authority been suspected of unreasonable conduct when, in fact, they were acting with the highest and wisest motives? History, when perhaps they had gone, justified their behaviour.

If we may not judge hastily of men, whose capacity or duties are beyond our ken, why should we undertake to pass sentence on the work of the Great God?

What do we know of plans that are from and to eternity; that involve not only the whole earth, but the whole universe for all time? We ought to be a little diffident in the presence of such magnificence.

If we grieve over the amount of sin and suffering which humanity endures, we ought to remember that of all the children of men the ones who have done most to destroy sin and to relieve suffering were among the most devoted of God's children. They sacrificed themselves to help the fallen and the needy. All some others can do is to repine sullenly, and reproach the great Creator. If you, dear reader, have not settled down into the helplessness and despair of atheism, bestir yourself, and find in the misery about you an opportunity for doing good. Instead of sitting in judgment upon God, win His gratitude by showing yourself truly devoted to your kind.

It will help you in the path of humility—the only legitimate path for you or me—to remember how faulty is your judgment of the very things that you see and touch. If you so often fail in small matters, how can you hope to render just decisions in the things that affect the universe, or in the affairs of an eternal Being? So distrust yourself. But above all, do not pass hasty judgment on things that are beyond your capacity. If you are too ready to pass censure on your neighbour, you may be found to be a slanderer.

God has not disclosed His entire plan to us. There are things that we cannot understand now. Let us use the knowledge we have and wait for further light. Things are working themselves out, through divine

guidance, towards an end which we do not always see. The Ruler's plan covers all time and all creation. We can see but little even of the things that transpire during our brief day. Believers hold that there will be a final day of reckoning when the finished plan will appear, and the justice of it be made manifest. Let us await it.

Making due allowance for our want of knowledge, weakness of judgment, lack of proper disposition, and, it may be, prejudice, we may venture to approach in all humility the great subject. We are to inquire if the condition in which this world of ours finds itself argues against the existence of a beneficent God. There is moral evil, mental and physical suffering among men, torture and wretchedness in the animal world. Let us begin with moral evil.

This form of evil can come only from a free being. The cruelties perpetrated by animals do not come under this head. Man alone can be the author of moral evil, which comes from the misuse or abuse of his freedom. God could be responsible for it only if He encouraged it, rewarded it, or, being in a position to do so, declined to punish it. I do not think that any sane person alleges the possibility of any one of these alternatives.

God does not, of course, prevent moral evil except by threatening punishment. But is there any other remedy short of the destruction of free will? Destroy free will and you make men machines, that can neither win praise nor incur blame. Only free service can please or merit reward. If you take away free will in order to prevent sin, you prevent at the same time the

practice of virtue, and eliminate all right to reward. Man then becomes to his God what the horse is to his owner, or a machine to its maker. He neither transgresses nor shuns transgression; but yields to a bent over which he has no control. Virtue and vice are both alien to him; he neither deserves punishment nor merits reward. Believers generally maintain that all material creation is brought into the service of the Creator through the intelligent and free action of man. If he be not free, there is no meritorious service on earth. If, then, the Almighty, in order to prevent moral evil, were to destroy man's liberty, there would be no virtue, no worthy service, no reward.

In attacking a position, it is but logical and fair to consider it in its totality. He would be a disingenuous opponent who, for the purpose of refuting a doctrine, would take it out of its setting, and separate it from the system of which it is a part. To be honest, one must meet the facts as they are. With this principle—which I think no one will dispute—in mind we shall proceed.

It will be admitted that, while theism has innumerable advocates everywhere, its chief protagonists are Christians. Now, Christians generally believe that the human family is not as God made it; but bears the effects of transgression. The belief that ours is a fallen nature is general, if not universal, with those who bear the name of Christ. Hence, it is held that the ills to which flesh is heir come not from Creation as God made it, but from man's sin. If some one should say that God, if there be a God, should remedy

this defect, he would imply, perhaps without knowing it, that the moral Governor of the universe should relieve free beings of the effects of their own conduct. This would be destructive of government.

Another teaching maintained by those who proclaim God is that there is a life beyond the grave, a life which is eternal; therefore, one compared with which the present existence is but a moment. Any argument against theism, derived from human ills, that fails to take cognizance of this fact is negligible. For, it proceeds to pass sentence upon a belief, while ignoring the very things that justify the belief. It would be as reasonable to ridicule patriots for cheering for a piece of cloth, ignoring the fact that the cloth represents the spirit of a nation. If you challenge the attitude of those who believe in God, despite the existence of evil, you must not forget that they have faith in a future life. Most of them would say that the present life can be explained only on the supposition that there is another beyond the grave.

Physical ills or sufferings are good for man. Trials bring out what is best in him. Ease, comfort, and indulgence are usually ruinous. They spell weakness, effeminacy, and decay. If indulgent parents spoil their children, as they often do, is it not because they desire to protect these children from all manner of hardship? And if the Creator always shielded us, He would not only take from us the things that make us strong and resolute, but would doom us to a weak, inglorious existence—an existence that could end only in disaster.

Further, if God always came to our aid in time of

trial we would grow careless and improvident. Why should we, especially those of us who are not ambitious, trouble ourselves about the future, about the danger of being homeless or hungry in our old age, if God always came to the rescue of human suffering. A little consideration will show that too great tenderness, no matter what its source, is ruinous.

Hence, I conclude that no one who is familiar with Christian teaching regarding human destiny, can for a moment invoke the existence of moral evil, or the sufferings to which human beings are subjected, as an argument against the existence of a wise, beneficent, and all-powerful Being, whom we call God.

ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

The doctrine of eternal punishment has often been used as the basis of an argument against the existence of God. The objection gains force from a consideration of extreme views once held by some Christians upon the question of predestination, and its opposite, reprobation.

But first of all it may be said that no teaching about punishment can be adduced as an argument against God's existence, though erroneous doctrine may well be made to tell against His justice and mercy. Extreme views about predestination and reprobation come under this head. But such views could never be regarded as general Christian teaching; and, further, they are now generally abandoned by the sects that at one time held them.

But, even apart from predestination and reprobation, eternal punishment is now without its difficulties.

We all approach the subject with considerable anxiety. Not, indeed, that we doubt a doctrine so emphasized in sacred Scriptures, but we must necessarily have considerable misgivings about our ability to understand and explain it.

It is some comfort to know that the most firm believers in God, as well as the ablest writers in the Christian Church, have accepted the doctrine wholeheartedly. Nor have they seen in it any argument against the existence or perfections of God. On the contrary, they have maintained that He is just and merciful even when He punishes.

As the question of future punishment depends upon

ERRATUM

The last two lines on page 130 should read: "But, even apart from predestination and reprobation, eternal punishment is not without its difficulties."

with certainty how many are actually doomed to eternal punishment; nor can any one presume to define what, apart from the loss of God, the degree of punishment really is. The Christian, however, will be fearless in saying that it is always less than is deserved. So that the Divine mercy is manifested ever.

Further, we maintain that the dread punishment is inflicted only on those who have deliberately—with full knowledge and complete consent—separated themselves from God. If they lose Him it is because they have cast Him away. This loss, which according to all Christian teaching is the greatest punishment of

the damned, is of their own choosing; and the choosing must be the deliberate act of a mind in full possession of its faculties.

Moreover, while the Christian does not deny that one's life may terminate immediately after the rejection of the Deity, still it usually happens that many overtures come to the sinner from the offended Majesty of God. Hence, we are enabled to infer that generally speaking the lost are those, who, having deliberately separated themselves from God, have refused many offers of reconciliation. Some will say that if sinners were told that they must die soon they would hasten to repent. Perhaps. But would this necessarily be an abandonment of sin, or would it be an effort to escape sin's punishment? In any event, if God gave warning to the sinners other than, "Be ye always prepared," it is quite possible that many, confident of being given time for repentance, would continue in their evil course until the dread notification had come. The plan would be an encouragement of sin, and the destruction of the moral government of the world.

But, some one will say, why create those whom the Creator knows will be damned. Very plausible, indeed, but only for a moment.

The policy would demand that the Creator should work a miracle, a frustrative miracle, to prevent the coming into the world of those whom He foreknew would, by abusing the faculties given them, forfeit their right to happiness. What claim can any one have to such interference with the laws of nature? A miracle is demanded that the wicked may be saved

the consequences of their wickedness! But this is not all.

Is it not possible that even from wicked ancestors, saints may spring? We find sinners in Christ's genealogical tree. Humanly speaking they were necessary in order that the Saviour might be born. Are we to ask that the great God should cut off posterity in order to prevent the punishment of a deliberate transgressor? But there are other reasons.

Suppose the divine plan were that those who, it was foreseen, would bring damnation upon themselves were prevented from coming into existence, then all who come into existence would know that they will ultimately be saved, no matter what they may do. Would not this again mean the destruction of the moral order? Why try to control passion when we are sure that all will come right in the end? The moral law would have lost its sanction.

Another consequence of doing away with eternal punishment would be the doing away with eternal reward. No hell, no heaven. Or would you send all men, independent of their merits or their crimes, to heaven? A queer heaven it would be, scarcely fit for decent folks.

But, you say, punish them for a while, for years or for ages; enlarge the scope of purgatory. After they are sufficiently punished, and sufficiently purified, bring them to heaven.

The Christian answers that they are never sufficiently purified, their sins being of such malice. And further, their mental attitude towards God has not

changed one iota. There is no repentance beyond the grave.

If, after thousands or millions of years, they could enter the kingdom of heaven, they would have yet a never-ending happiness. Hence, despite the fact that they had sinned grievously and had not repented, indeed had not changed, they would still enjoy eternally the things that God has prepared for those who love Him. Their punishment would bear no proportion to the rewards in store for them. Hence, again, a breaking down of the moral government of the world.

But why not kill the soul? Only God can kill a spiritual substance endowed as it is with immortality. And He is asked to destroy that to which He gave undying life in order to save one from an end which he had deliberately chosen for Himself. It would certainly be more reasonable to ask Him to kill it before it had transgressed. However, the objection reminds us of a criminal who tries suicide in order to escape the gallows.

So, a calm and intelligent view of eternal punishment, instead of being an argument against the acceptance of God, only makes the theistic position stronger.

THE SUFFERINGS OF ANIMALS

I approach this subject with a little diffidence, though without a doubt. Difficulties do not necessarily make doubts.

Animals do suffer much; and it does not seem that there is for them an hereafter in which compensation may be made. Therefore, one naturally asks, what

is the purpose of the sufferings which they are obliged to endure?

I may not be able to give a convincing answer ; but the theist will say that my inability arises from the fact that I do not know the mind of the Creator. If I could but see His purpose, which is not yet revealed, matters would be different. But His plan is not complete, neither is it disclosed. The universe is still progressing towards some goal, which, when attained and manifest, will justify all that has happened and all that will happen.

Besides, it is very likely that animals do not suffer so much as we suppose. We are prone to interpret the animal in the language of our feelings. We presume that he suffers as we would suffer in similar circumstances. This is hardly the case. He is without dread of the future—the thing that causes most of our troubles. Some one has said that “ a coward dies a thousand times, and a brave man but once.” Fear makes the difference. The animal is not brave, but he is without knowledge of impending evil. When his enemy is out of sight, fear of him ceases. The thought of what may happen, and the memory of what has happened, mental states so troublesome to man, do not bother the animal at all. Moreover, he does not suffer as we in our tenderness think he does. A strong man, accustomed to hardship, does not suffer pain, either physically or mentally, as does his delicate brother. If this be so, as it is, why may we not conclude that the animal suffers much less than either?

It is said that even in great accidents men do not at

first suffer much. They are rather stunned. The suffering, if they survive, comes later. When one animal is attacked by another, or by man, he is very likely bewildered into insensibility. The agony, such as it is, is usually not prolonged; for as a rule death soon follows.

Yet, we must admit that there is suffering. But we must also remember that there seems to be a sort of income tax on all possessions, natural or acquired. Every living thing pays something on its possessions. Property, family, health, good name, friendship, etc., all exact this toll.

The animal life is on the whole a happy one. Animals enjoy much, and their enjoyment is, while it lasts, unalloyed. Without memory of past hardships, without misgiving about the present or dread of the future, while life and health and plenty remain, their enjoyment is complete. In fact, there are those who maintain that their existence would be far happier than that of man, if as atheists say, there is no future life.

Evolutionists all claim that there is constant progress from lower to higher forms. If, then, the lower is subservient to the higher, if, in fact, it must make way for the higher, this is but what evolution demands. It is hard, then, to see how the evolutionist can shed tears when the lower form is made to serve the higher, even when the former becomes the prey of the latter.

The Christian theist holds that the animal creation is not what God intended it to be. For, it has suffered through primal transgression. St. Paul gives

expression to the view when he says that "the creature was made subject to vanity not willingly," and that "the creature itself shall be delivered from the servitude of corruption." (Romans viii:21 and ff.) All creation feels the taint of sin.

It is rash presumption in man to assume that he can discover the design or purpose of the Creator. It is even worse to attempt to sit in judgment upon His providence. We are not to judge, but to be judged. Our position, our weakness, our ignorance, if we only realize these as they are, ought to make us humble. We, who regulate ourselves so indifferently, ought not to presume to regulate the universe, or measure with our little tape plans that reach from an eternal past to an eternal future.

How do we know what good purpose the sufferings of animals may serve? They are our servants, not our equals. We have requisitioned them in our work, in our ambitions, in our wars, in the advancement of science. Their sufferings teach us much, teach us to be kind, to be provident; they show us how to relieve human ills. It is also worthy of remark that those who have shown most tenderness to animals were not atheists, but Christians. Francis of Assisi pleaded that the hungry beast (which he called brother wolf), that had been prowling about, should be fed. He did not see in the sufferings of animals an argument against the existence of God.

It has been said that if animals did not suffer, if all survived, they would increase so fast that there would not be room on earth or support for all of them. Others may reply that God, if there be a God, should

have provided against this possibility. It is not difficult to see what this would mean; it would demand constant interference, miraculous interference, with both men and animals. It would require that when the bird is about to pounce upon the worm, the Almighty should hold it back; and that when you go out to shoot rabbits the same power should strike the gun from your hands. Slaughter houses should be razed to the ground, and the cattle cars burned up by divine indignation!

The one who sees in the sufferings of animals an argument against the existence of God is easily convinced!

Individual suffering is necessary to the survival of the species. If there were no pangs of hunger there would be no hunting for food; no suffering from the attacks of enemies, no effort to escape or defend. This would mean the decay or death of the animal world. So, the possible suffering which may at any time become actual, is necessary to the continued existence of animal life.

If animals were not permitted to suffer they could not be our servants. For at the very moment we need them most, the power that is expected to pity them might step in to relieve them of their burden. The horseman could never be certain that his steed would be permitted to take him to his destination. Were the Creator to prevent animal suffering, human life would become so uncertain that it would be a nuisance. We could undertake nothing until we had first ascertained that in our efforts we would inflict no pain on any member of the animal kingdom.

So, it would appear that the sufferings of animals, instead of being an argument against the existence of God, when properly understood, only adds to the overwhelming evidence in favour of the reality of an all-wise, all-powerful Ruler of the Universe.

I cannot hope to change the views of those who love to shed tears over "Nature red in tooth and claw." No blindness equals that of those who will not see. Yielding to an unnatural animosity towards their Creator, they seek to discredit His work. They fasten upon any and every apparent flaw in the world about them, and refuse to consider explanations. If they would but nourish their grudges in silence they might be regarded as negligible. But they insist upon propagating their doctrine of despair among the ignorant and the weak.

XI

THEISM VERSUS ATHEISM

BY theism I understand a system that accepts a personal God, Who, in His infinite power and wisdom, freely called into being whatever there is that is not Himself. By atheism I understand a denial of all this. It is a system that claims to explain all there is without being obliged to invoke the aid of a personal God. In our day, atheism usually appeals to evolution, which it regards, not merely as a method, but as an agency.

We of the old school ask the new claimant to divine honours to justify its attitude, by explaining some very important questions. We ask it, "whence is matter"? and we receive the answer: "Matter is its own source, for it is eternal."

We are not surprised at the answer, for it is the only one that atheism can give without stultifying itself. If matter be not eternal it must have come into being through the operation of an agency other than matter. To admit this would be to come dangerously near to theism. So to defend the eternity of matter is a question of life or death with atheistic evolution.

Nor will it do to claim an eternity improperly so-called. Could it be shown that matter is so old that fabulous figures are necessary to indicate its plenitude of years, or that its beginning is lost in the twilight of a remote past, this would not suffice. We must be

shown that it had no beginning. For if it had a beginning at any time, whether quadrillions or sextillions of years ago, it must have had something to bring it into being, even as it would need the something were yesterday its natal day. We have already seen that years of themselves accomplish nothing. So, therefore, if matter be not created, it must be self-existing and eternal in the strictest sense of the word.

We ask evolutionists for proof that it is eternal, and the only argument they give us is this: Either it is eternal or it is created. It is not created, therefore it is eternal. That this is a pure begging of the question is obvious to any one. The contention is this: We have taken the position that there is no creator, and this position requires that we declare matter to be eternal. Therefore, it is eternal. We cannot prove that it is so, but our needs require that it should be so. We must abandon our system or insist that matter is eternal.

Atheism does not attempt to show that its contention is true, though naturally the burden of proof is upon it. We, however, hope to show not only that the eternity of matter cannot be demonstrated, but that the very opposite is demonstrable.

The eternal must be self-existing and independent, therefore, unchangeable. If there be anything absolutely certain about matter it is this: it is neither independent nor unchangeable. The evolutionist will admit that it can be kicked about, made to take different shapes and serve different purposes; in fact, that it is always changing. It has gone through a series of conditions; a long series, no doubt. But no series can by any possibility imply eternity. For there is no

series to which you may not add one. Hence, if a series could be eternal we would have the eternal plus one, which is an absurdity.

Nor can matter be eternal in the sense of indefinite time. For, as elsewhere shown, if it had seen the untold ages that even this imperfect conception of eternity gives, it would have gone through all changes, which it is alleged to have gone through, myriads of years ago. But the facts are that some of its changes are recent. So matter cannot be eternal either in the perfect or imperfect sense.

I charge, then, atheism with being unable to account for the beginning of things, except on principles that are impossible and absurd. It is, therefore, utterly in error on a most important question; a question that must be answered correctly before any progress is made.

Again, we see matter everywhere in motion, and we know that it could not put itself in motion. What moved it? Whatever moved it must be outside itself, and must be capable of putting the universe in motion. There is no other alternative. But atheism cannot tell what this prime mover is. Indeed, it must insist that there is no such prime mover. Hence, it demands motion without a mover, and hence scores another absurdity.

If it should answer that motion belongs to matter we would reply, then all matter must be in motion. But we know it is not. Also, if motion belong of necessity to matter and matter is eternal its movements to date should all be over long ages ago: for obviously matter is not infinite, but limited.

Another difficulty which atheism has to meet arises from the obvious fact that there is life upon earth. Was it always here? No. Even atheistic science admits and asserts that our earth was at one time in such condition that life of any kind could not exist upon it. Now it teems with exuberant life. What brought about the change? Can atheism account for it? It cannot, but it expresses a hope that some day it will. On the strength of this promise it demands our allegiance. What nonsense!

And as atheistic science cannot account for life, even in the lowest form, it certainly cannot explain how inert matter gave being to the human intellect.

When we consider the spiritual element in man, we come in contact with the greatest marvel with which we can make ourselves familiar. It transcends all material things, and approaches the confines of the infinite. Not only can we form mental images of the things we have seen, but we have some understanding of things invisible. We can encompass the earth, or take our flight to the stars. Can atheism account for the wonderful range of the human mind? No sane man, unobsessed by the resolve to dismiss God, could for a moment think so.

But there is another faculty of the human mind equally marvelous. We know we can exercise free will, at least, sometimes. We can do good or evil, we can bend ourselves to the performance of disagreeable things. Does matter convey this power of choice? We know that matter can work but in one way in a given situation. Its course is determined. But *we* can decide what we shall do. Can atheism explain

this? Most assuredly it cannot. It fails once more on a very important question.

We are all aware of the existence within us of a silent monitor we call conscience. There is no one without it; though it is not so outspoken or so authoritative in some as in others. Its existence and merit are so widely recognized that were it said of any man that he was without conscience, few would care to trust him.

The business of this censor is to bring home to each one what is to be done and what avoided, at each moment. It commands and forbids, approves and disapproves. Should we defy its mandates, it pursues us with remorse. We cannot rid ourselves of it. Nor does any upright man desire to be relieved of it. For its commands and prohibitions are always in the interest of righteousness.

Ask atheism whence is this censor of morals, and it can give you no answer. It may chatter a little about hereditary and training, which may doubtless account for the quality of conscience. But no consideration or agency that the atheist can invoke will account for that universal, silent voice, whose authority is so potent, and whose influence no honest man would diminish. If there be no God, Whose voice it echoes, there is no accounting for conscience. Hence, we have another far-reaching fact of human experience for which atheism has no explanation.

It will also be admitted that there is a universal conviction of the validity of what is called the moral law, which does not come from any human enactment, and does not depend upon any consideration of

utility. This law goes with us wherever we go. Ask atheism whence is it, and atheism remains dumb. Who enacted that law? Atheism does not know.

But if we do not know who enacted it, and if we do not know that he who enacted it has jurisdiction over us, what do we care about it? A law made by the Shah of Persia would not concern us much.

Men who believe not in God may respect the moral law. We would advise them to do so. But, apart from expediency or convention, there is absolutely no reason why they should; especially, why they should regard it as of obligation. It comes not from any human legislator, but from God; and if there be no God, there is no moral law.

Again, presuming that there could be a law without a law-giver, and that, despite the non-existence of God, the moral law could be regarded as binding, there would still be lacking a necessary condition of all law, sanction. Without God there would be no means of punishing the violation of the moral law, or rewarding obedience to it. This, I say on the assumption that the laws of health and prudence are not violated with the moral law: and I believe it easy to show that one may transgress against the recognized moral code for years, without incurring the penalties visited upon those who violate the code of health or the code which society imposes upon itself.

Atheism is utterly unable to account for the moral law, either as imposing penalties or conferring rewards. The one who transgresses goes unpunished, and the hero who dies in defence of right receives no compensation from atheism.

When we come to consider orderly existence, and the design which is everywhere apparent, we find materialistic philosophy again staring blankly. In its effort to save its face, it points to some few things in which design is not so manifest, and thus endeavours to divert attention from the wonderful purpose to which nature everywhere testifies. It does this because it cannot answer the questions a reasonable man may ask it. It cannot pretend to tell the origin of the marvelous intelligence seen in the heavens above and in the earth beneath. Atheism is stupid and voiceless when any question of importance is put. It is silent on everything that the inquiring mind would like to know. And, yet, it has the hardihood to pit its ignorance or nescience against the views of men in all ages, against the convictions upon which our civilization is based, upon which Christianity is builded, views held and proclaimed by the great men of all ages, including Christ of Nazareth. It is not ashamed to assert, though it makes no effort to explain. It clings to doctrine for which there is no defence. We put to it question after question and we get no answer. We raise a dozen difficulties and it solves not one of them. Did theism show such incapacity in meeting any one of these difficulties as atheism shows in meeting each of them, I would cease to be a theist.

This is but a part of the case against atheism, and its step-sister agnosticism. They answer no questions, but rely upon repeated assertion. They build up nothing, but tear down all that men prize. They give no comfort, but are fruitful of gloom and despair.

XII

DOES THEISM ANSWER?

IT says “in the beginning God created heaven and earth.” An Eternal, self-existing Being decreed in eternity to create material things in time. As He was infinite in power, He was able to call forth, according to His design, things that had no previous existence in any form.

In process of time, matter evolved itself under His guidance, or by virtue of the forces which He in the beginning imparted to it. The solar system and the other systems were formed according to this law. The law, which was really a force, coming from the Creator, not only gave the heavenly bodies their distinctive existence, but gave them a destiny which they must attain. It gave limits to each in order that in pursuing its course it might help, not hinder, any other. A marvelous plan coming from a mind of infinite wisdom! A plan, too, which, beginning with the beginning, has been regulating all things up to the present, and which we are confident will regulate them to the end.

When this earth of ours became fit to receive life, the Creator gave it life. The higher forms either came directly from Him, or developed under His influence and guidance from lower conditions. The process continued until earth was prepared to receive the lord of creation, man, whom the Creator made to His own image and likeness.

This lord of creation was an epitome of creation, possessing matter, vegetable and animal life, and also the life we call spiritual.

The Creator gave man a destiny which he is to attain by observance of the moral law. Man was also given intelligence that he might know the law. He was given freedom that he might be able to render free obedience. He was given conscience that law might be always present to him. Rewards were promised, penalties threatened, that man might be encouraged to use his freedom righteously, and might be deterred from transgression. But nothing was permitted to interfere with his freedom. For God intended that man's service should be honourable to his Creator, and meritorious to himself. Hence it must be free. Infinite wisdom planned and infinite power accomplished. So, in the theistic system, God is all in all, the beginning and the end of all things.

This theory explains everything; no other theory explains anything. The difficulties that may be advanced against it are negligible; are in fact born of our mental limitations. The Christian theist can readily explain human sufferings, even eternal punishment, and can show that all is consistent with an acceptance of an all-wise and beneficent God.

Even the sufferings of animals can be explained; though it would be presumption in us to claim that we are cognizant with all God's plans, as it would be impious to take the stand that if we cannot understand all we will not believe. "Blessed are they that have not seen and have believed." A true and tried friend demands that we do not forsake him even

though, for the moment, we do not understand all he does or says. If all things were plain there would be little merit in clinging to the cause.

Here, then, is an intelligent and free Being, the Author of all intelligence and freedom, Who, Himself eternal and uncreated, for His own wise purposes, called matter into existence; gave it laws that govern it in all its movements; gave it life in all its forms, and imparted to the world of animal existence the impulse or instinct which preserves each species. We are also willing to concede that He bestowed upon them the power of improving their condition in favourable surroundings.

Here, then, is the Creator of matter, the Author of life, the Designer of the universe in all its movements, the Giver of intelligence and liberty, the Authority back of conscience, the Source of law with its sanction of rewards and punishments; the Beginning and End of all things; the Eternal, Omnipotent and All-wise God. He explains all, atheism explains nothing.

Whence, then, is the power of atheism? We have already expressed our opinion. We think it comes from thoughtlessness, from bravado, from the influence of others, from lack of training, from erroneous views of God. But its main strength lies in the fact that it imposes no obligation. If a stranger pass your door and ask nothing of you, you have no right to question him.

Atheism asks nothing from us. In fact, it relieves us of what to many is a heavy burden—obedience to law, submission to the Divine Will, judgment, penalty. It is safe to say that if atheism were as exacting as theism is, there would be few atheists.

XIII

WHAT IS GOD?

WE have already seen that a First Cause, which we call God, is absolutely necessary. If there were no first cause there would never be anything; for, putting it in another way, if there were no first cause itself uncaused, all that is would be an effect, which implies an absurdity. An effect presupposes a cause.

Seeing, then, that there is a First Cause, we ask: what is it? We already know it is powerful enough to call the universe into being, and intelligent enough to give guidance to all creation for all time. This much we have seen, and this much we must admit, unless we are willing to give up the pursuit of knowledge.

We have also seen that the First Cause is a Person; which means that it is a complete and intelligent Being. Only a complete and intelligent being is a person. A horse is not a person for, though complete, it has not the necessary intelligence. The First Cause is complete in itself and is also intelligent—indeed the source of all intelligence. Hence It is a person.

The First Cause is eternal in the strictest sense of the word. For, were it not eternal it would need something to bring it into being. So, back of the

First Cause we would have a cause, which again is an absurdity. As it is eternal and uncaused, it is self-existing. It is necessary being. It could not not be. Its nature is to exist. It is, of necessity, actual being.

The First Cause is simple, which means that it is uncomposed. Were it composed it would be necessary that its component parts should have existed before it. It would be the product of these, hence, not the First Cause. Also it would imply that the Infinite is made of finite things, another absurdity.

As it is not composed, it is immortal. Death comes from dissolution, a resolving into component parts. We die through the separation of the spirit from the body. As there is no composition in the First Cause, death can claim no dominion over it. The First Cause is immortal in Its own right. The human soul is immortal because the First Cause had made it unto the likeness of Itself. Of course, its immortality is different from that of the First Cause.

The First Cause possesses all perfections in an infinite degree. Nothing is wanting to It. Only through It are perfections possible. It is all-wise, all-holy, all-powerful. It can create: in fact, can bring into being anything that does not involve a contradiction—anything that is not absurd.

The attribute of immensity or ubiquity belongs to the First Cause. Not that it is extended as material things are extended. Hence, we can not visualize the immensity of the First Cause. But we know It is everywhere, not only in power but in essence; not only in part, but in Its totality. This may be difficult to understand, because of our tendency to demand

mental images as an aid to knowledge. Spiritual things do not leave images on the brain.

The First Cause is unchangeable. Change of locality implies motion, which of course belongs to material things, and the First Cause is not material. Besides, the First Cause has the virtue of immensity or ubiquity which precludes motion. Change might also come from the acquisition of some virtue or some degree thereof. But the First Cause can acquire neither, for It has all virtues in an infinite degree. Nor will any one suppose that It can lose a perfection, or suffer a diminution of a perfection.

The First Cause is all-good. Evil is not, as Dualism would have it, a positive thing. It is the absence of good where good ought to be.

The First Cause is all-just. We have already seen that the Moral Ruler of the world must be all-just. But before the world came into being, the First Cause *was* in all Its perfections, hence all-just.

The First Cause is all-merciful. Should a difficulty spring up in reconciling justice and mercy, the Christian apologist has a complete explanation. Christ satisfied all justice and purchased for us all mercy. It is not necessary to go beyond this, or to enter into an elaborate dissertation upon the subject.

So all perfections belong to an infinite degree to the First Cause, whatever seems to connote imperfection, as when it is said that God's anger is enkindled, that He meditates revenge, or when it is said of Him "that He was, and is, and is to come," the writer is but addressing himself to our intelligence, or speaking to us in a human manner. As a matter of

fact, the First Cause is not stirred by emotion, either of anger or of tenderness. If It punish, It does so in perfect calm; if It show mercy there is no human weakness in the act. The Great First Cause is always God-like.

In speaking of the Divine perfections, we must not suppose them separate attributes of the Divine nature. We must not think that God forgets His infinite mercy when He contemplates His justice, or that His power in any way differs from His goodness. We, in order to understand, have to consider each perfection apart. But in God there is nothing apart. His goodness, holiness, justice, mercy, power, ubiquity, eternity, etc., all are one; and these perfections all belong inseparably to the Divine nature or essence; and the Divine nature is one with the Divine Existence. There is no composition in the First Cause. Essence, existence, attribute, all are one in that Eternal, Infinite, Perfect Being.

XIV

HAPPINESS IN BELIEVING

ONCE more I use the word belief in the broad sense, that is, for the acceptance of God, whether one's conviction come from faith properly so-called, or from reason. There is, I think, happiness in each; though, of course, supernatural faith of which Christians speak is the more efficacious.

An army officer whose discipline is strict, and who demands much of his men, often provokes them by what they call unnecessary restraint, or too much attention to drilling. But, when the day of trial comes, they, if they have sense, will thank him for the condition of preparedness in which they find themselves. Owing to his insistence they now find themselves in every sense fit.

Similarly, men engaged in some pursuit, which they would like to follow in their own way, chafe under the restraints imposed upon them by belief in a personal God. But, when the day of trial comes to them, when sickness or adversity tames their proud spirits, and when they are inclined to sink under the weight of their burdens, how happy they will be to think that they do not stand alone: that there is One Who proffers them aid, if they are but willing to accept it.

Or, when a beloved one is called hence, and when the heart feels that it must break under the bereavement, what a consolation to reflect that He who gave

the dear friend has but called him home, and that the tender relationship is not severed, but only suspended for a while, to be resumed under happier conditions!

Also, when the time comes that we must turn to the bourne whence no traveler returns, what comfort is derived from the confident expectation that refuge and welcome await us on the far-off shore: that when our earthly habitation is dissolved, a home not made by hands is prepared to receive us! Compare the final end of the atheist with that of the true believer, and you will discover a contrast, in comparison with which every other contrast pales.

I do not say that this thought could or should make one believe. But it certainly ought to bring even the atheist regret that life has in store for us nothing better than atheism offers.

The reflections that must crowd upon declining years come to all thinking people sometimes throughout life, bringing sombre views to those who do not believe. Indeed, only cultivated thoughtlessness, feigned stoicism, or riotous living, can hide from any one the dread sequel to a life without God.

The believer, on the other hand, may have his ups and downs, joys and trials, successes and defeats; he may even sometimes experience dire remorse because of transgression, or shame because of continued weakness. But he is never bereft of hope. There is still mercy, and some day or other he will seek it.

The idealist who longs to see justice prevail and charity reign, and who can hardly hope to find the conditions he desires secured here, can look with confidence to another life where his most ardent longings

will be more than satisfied. Men dream of peace, of holiness, of mercy, of a power that is both benign and great. Some have conjured up a millennium, during which evil will cease to be, and holiness encircle the earth.

The believer is convinced that there is more than this in store for mankind. He holds that perfect happiness is a reality, that all the perfections and all the virtues have actual existence in a Being who is all-wise, all-holy, all-just, all-merciful; a Being, too, who is our Father and Friend. We do not accept the Deistic view that the Great First Cause created the earth and then left it to itself. We hold that the Creator is also Sustainer of the world, in which He is ceaselessly active. We hold that He has made Himself known to us through His creation, but still more clearly through revelation. We are convinced that He never forsakes us, though unfortunately we do sometimes forsake Him. Provided we will it, He is always with us. Hence, our happiness in believing.

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